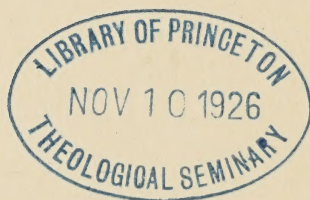


A HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT TIMES



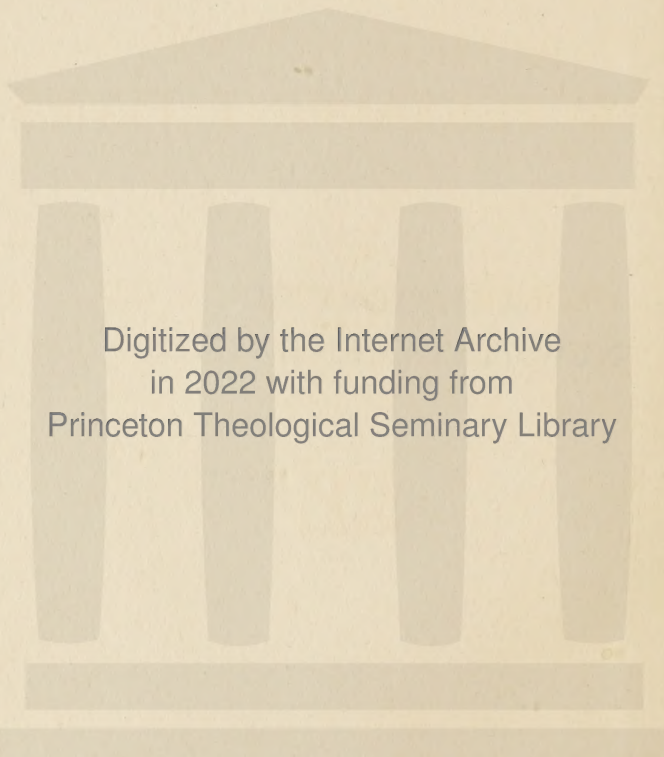
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GEORGE M. GIBSON



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A HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

✓ BY

GEORGE M. GIBSON, A.M., D.D.



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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF JEWISH HISTORY

IN the year 722 B.C. Northern Israel was completely subjugated by Assyria—her entire area being absorbed by that great empire—and the “Kingdom of Israel” passed into history as “The Ten Lost Tribes.” All of the wealthy and aristocratic classes, along with any others who might be capable of making trouble, were deported and scattered throughout Mesopotamia and Media, and the depopulated areas of the land of Israel were reoccupied by people from northern Syria and Babylonia. Thus the national spirit was broken and the Lost Tribes were merged into the life of the other races that had crowded in upon them, and their identity completely disappeared—“they dissolved like salt in water.”

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

The stroke that so effectively destroyed the Northern Kingdom created a sense of uneasiness among the people of Judah that made their rulers studiously

watchful for measures and means that promised safety for their little kingdom. But despite certain important moral and religious reforms effected by Hezekiah and Josiah, and the wise counsel of the fervent Isaiah, whose career as a prophet covered forty years of this critical period, and who is regarded as "the greatest statesman of Hebrew history," the ideas of the Babylonian religion filtered into Judea and spread among the people like wildfire. Thus partially losing their hold on Jehovah, the God of their fathers, their morals began to decay and they dropped back into the licentiousness that always goes with pagan faiths. The exalted idealism of their prophets, and even the idea of Jehovah himself, seemed for a time to be almost lost in this abyss of heathenism. Left thus without vision or moral fiber, their subjugation was inevitable, and in 586 B.C., under Nebuchadrezzar's command, the Babylonian army besieged and took the sacred city and stripped it of everything of value. The walls of the city were demolished, the temple, the royal palace, and many of the private houses were burned and the entire population of the city was carried into exile. Only the people who lived in the villages and country places—"the dregs as far as energy, wealth, and brains were concerned"—were allowed to continue to occupy the land.

The people of Judah were now torn into three widely separated parts; the country people left in Palestine forming the largest of the fragments, the second largest being those who fled into Egypt some time after Nebuchadrezzar's conquest; and, the smallest group, those who were carried as exiles and planted by the rivers of Babylon. In this last group were found the brains, the skill, and the culture of the Jewish race, and the ideas and ideals that were to determine their future history even to our own day were here cultivated and developed. It is with this group therefore that the religious history of this nation is concerned.

EFFECTS OF THE EXILE

1. Those who were thus carried into exile were suddenly transplanted from a distant, isolated country to the center of a great world empire. In contrast to the simple and narrow interests of their former life they were now at the center of a new culture. A great civilization that was eagerly engaged with a multitude of pursuits threw its fascination about them. They discovered that their conqueror was a great administrator, giving laws to many provinces, promoting an intelligent interest in agriculture and commerce, and thus making his government stable through the prosperity and loyalty of the people. They looked with

wonder upon great Babylon with her hanging gardens, her splendid palaces, her costly temples. These symbols of wealth and political power gave them a vision of new possibilities now open to them in commerce, in government, and in education, and brought about a permanent transformation in the Jewish attitude toward life. Instead of being absorbed, as heretofore, with purely local and provincial interests, the Hebrews henceforth became citizens of the world, and from that day on they have exercised an important influence on its commerce and have done much toward shaping its general history.

THE RETURN TO JUDEA

After the death of Nebuchadrezzar, Cyrus, who appears in history as the king of a little province known as Anshan, with a marvelous stroke of genius quickly gained control of the Babylonian Empire and all of southwestern Asia, and became one of the great leaders and rulers of history. He was so magnanimous that he converted his foes into allies and won their complete confidence by showing the utmost respect and reverence for their religions. It was his policy to restore deported peoples to their native lands and give them liberty to adhere to their racial customs and religions. Hence, in 538 B.C. an edict was issued

granting the Jews immediate permission to return to the Holy Land and rebuild their sacred temple and city. Only a remnant availed themselves of this opportunity, and the record of their heroic efforts in rebuilding their wasted homeland is preserved for us in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The century that followed Nehemiah's return was probably one of the happiest periods in the history of the Jewish people. While the colony very slowly grew in numbers, their borders were gradually extended, their people were comparatively prosperous, and all were quite secure in both their political and religious liberties.

THE CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER

1. Alexander, the Macedonian, in the year 334 B.C., suddenly startled the world with a series of brilliant victories that finally brought all of Asia Minor, Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon under his control. In ten short years he had asserted his authority over the entire world occupied by the Jewish people and then his marvelous career was suddenly brought to a close by his untimely death in 323 B.C. After his death there was bitter strife among the various Macedonian chiefs over the division of his empire, and Palestine became the occasion, by reason of her location, of a

standing quarrel between Egypt and Syria. Sometimes she was under the control of one of these powers and again she was in the hands of the other. Finally, a hundred years after the death of Alexander, Antiochus the Great settled the quarrel by a decisive victory that permanently ended Egyptian control over Palestine, except for a brief period in the Middle Ages.

2. The most tragic feature of this entire period of Grecian domination was the effort to Hellenize completely the Jewish people. While Alexander showed them special consideration, remitting the tribute during the Sabbatic year and allowing them to live in harmony with their own laws and social customs, his general policy was to unite the peoples of his vast empire in a distinctly Greek civilization; and while his early death made it impossible for his policy to be put into immediate effect, his successors inherited his idea and persistently sought to bind together the diverse elements of the empire by means of a common culture. The spread of this culture was dependent primarily upon the general knowledge of the Greek language. In their language the Greeks had a peculiar and a commendable pride. It was a language of such precision and beauty that other tongues seemed crude and barbarous in comparison with it. It therefore

rapidly superseded the many other languages in use within the Empire and its cultural influence was most pronounced. New ideas from the golden period of Greek learning flowed in upon the people, reviving an interest in hitherto neglected questions of life and immensely expanding their views. While the uneducated clung to their original dialects, Greek became the language of government, of business, of literature, and of art. The Jews of the dispersion so generally adopted the use of this language in all of their intercourse that their sacred books were translated into Greek.

3. The Greek love for amusements also formed a part of this Hellenizing process. To the Greek the main end of life was enjoyment. Sport and play had a large place in the life of the people and all sorts of amusements were provided for and encouraged. But there was something that appealed to the intellect in all of these recreations. Their games were manifestations of skill, and literary and musical features always accompanied their festivals, while their best literature was directly associated with the theater. This presented such a contrast to the serious and prosaic life the Jews had known in the land of their fathers that it gave peculiar charm to this new culture.

4. But Hellenism carried with it most unhappy in-

fluences. The gymnasium elevated the athlete into a hero, licentiousness was often approved and cultivated, and in the whole social structure cleverness was commended rather than righteousness. Thus Hellenism so completely dominated the world that it almost proved fatal to the distinctive Jewish civilization. Long before the beginning of Roman supremacy this culture had made itself felt in distant Palestine, so that its educated classes became in large measure Hellenized. The young men of the more aristocratic families felt strongly the pull toward the prevailing culture through their desires for position and influence in the political life of the day. Instead of being hemmed in by the narrow life of barren Judea, they longed to be freed from those limiting practices that had stamped them as a "peculiar people" and to mingle without restraint in this new and fascinating civilization. All the paths of this new world seemed to the worldly-minded Jews to be paths of peace, but they failed to see that they were really leading toward the destruction of their own religion and of all that was most sacred in their civilization.

THE PROTEST OF THE PIOUS

This dangerous drift in Jewish life gave birth to the party known as the Pious or Godly that threw

itself vigorously into the work of counteracting the rapid tendency toward racial and religious disintegration. This party was made up mostly from the poorer people who lived in the villages and country places rather than in Jerusalem. Its members asserted with growing firmness their adherence to their law and their devotion to all the customs of their fathers.

When Antiochus Epiphanes became ruler he was bent on crushing this anti-Hellenistic party and there was finally attempted, for the first time in the history of the Græco-Roman world, a movement the special object of which was the destruction of a religion. All who clung to Judaism were marked as victims. Jewish worship and all Jewish rites were prohibited. Particularly were the observance of the Sabbath and circumcision designated as offenses to be punished with death. The same penalty was also to be visited upon all of those in whose possession a copy of the Law was found. Immediately an army of more than 20,000 was sent into Judea to see that these orders were put into effect. Finally these troops entered Jerusalem, demolished its walls, stripped its temple, robbed and burned homes, and carried into slavery a multitude of women and children. Then in the place of the great altar of sacrifice to Israel's God, an altar was built to the Olympian Zeus, and at this altar the Jews were

compelled to worship by offering swine's flesh as sacrifice. This setting up of the statue of Zeus in this holy place was what was referred to in Daniel as the "Abomination of Desolation." This was the supreme test of the devotion of this long-suffering people to the religion of their fathers, and while the faith of many was so crushed under this savage treatment that they openly accepted the religion of their conqueror, there were others, the faithful remnant, who fled from these insults to their faith to hiding places in the caves of the wilderness. Like animals brought to bay, this sorely persecuted remnant were now ready to turn upon and rend their enemies.

THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

In the midst of these persecutions a royal officer came to the little town of Modein in the hills of Judea and commanded that all of the inhabitants attend a heathen sacrifice. Among those who assembled in answer to this summons was the aged priest, Mattathias, with his five sons—John, Simon, Judas, Eleazer, and Jonathan. Mattathias, as the leading man in the town, was asked to offer the first sacrifice, with assurance of much gold and the king's favor if he would at once comply with the order. This offer he indignantly refused and when one of his fellow-townsmen

offered his service in performing the sacrifice the aged priest leaped upon him and slew him; then running his sword through the king's officer and demolishing the altar, he called to the people of his own race: "Whosoever is zealous for the law and loyal to the covenant, let him follow me." Thus the brave leader with his five sons and other daring men hastened to the wilderness and declared war to the death on their cruel enemies. Men of all classes, from desperadoes to those of the party of the "Pious," gathered around this brave leader and marched with him through the country, destroying heathen altars, applying the sword to renegade Jews, compelling the circumcision of children, and thus openly defying the power of their heathen oppressors. This aged priest soon died, succumbing to the hardships of this guerrilla warfare, but his sons, who inherited both his courage and his capacity for leadership, carried on this aggressive opposition until a glorious victory was achieved. Their religion was saved and there was never afterward a question concerning the freedom of their faith. The conflict from this time on was for political rather than religious liberty.

2. The Syrians withdrew their army, but only a little while elapsed before the conflict was renewed, the struggle now involving the appointment of the

high priest. The Syrian king appointed a certain Hellenist to this high office, but the people of Jerusalem refused to recognize him and thrust him out of the city. In a short time a new Syrian army appeared and Judas, the Maccabean leader, was slain. This situation brought to the leadership of the Jews, Simon, the last and the ablest of the sons of Mattathias. He quickly brought all available forces under his command and his opposition appeared so formidable that the new Syrian king, Demetrius II, soon made up his mind that his safer course was to gain the friendship and support of this able leader. In order therefore to secure this support he made overtures and granted all concessions demanded—and thus “was the yoke of the heathen taken away from Israel.” All of the promises that had been made under Jonathan’s leadership were guaranteed and the payment of tribute to Syria was to cease immediately and for all time. Then the Jewish people made Simon both high priest and general, as they expressed it, “forever, until there should arise a faithful prophet.”

3. This was the beginning of a new day in Jewish history, a period of peace and prosperity such as had hardly been surpassed. “Simon provided food for the cities and furnished them with the means of fortification, and he strengthened all the distressed of his

people, he was full of zeal for the law, and every lawless and wicked person he banished. He made the sanctuary glorious, and multiplied the vessels of the temple." (1 Macc. 148: 15.)

This great and good ruler was finally put to death by his ambitious son-in-law and his third son, John Hyrcanus, seized the reins of government and laid claim to all of his father's titles. Fired with great worldly ambitions, he gave himself to mere conquest. The marvelous religious zeal that had characterized the Maccabeans disappeared and in its place there came worldliness and greed for power. This course alarmed those who gave first place in their thought to their religion and drew them into closer and more effective union.

RISE OF THE PHARISAIC PARTY

In the days when Jonathan was in authority there had grown up a party of the more pious who protested against all state measures that did not directly contribute to the promotion of their religion. Provoked by the ambitious schemes of John, these "separatists," known as "Pharisees," now became active as opponents of all such worldly plans, while those who were in sympathy with the policies of the ruling house became a party known as Sadducees. Just as the rivalry between these two parties was becoming sharp,

John's life came to its close and the reins of government passed into the hands of his incapable children, who finally wrecked the Jewish nation. It was at this critical period in Jewish history that the strong hand of Rome was laid upon her and her political independence passed forever into history.

ROMAN SWAY

1. By a remarkable series of victories Pompey had quickly brought under his control the whole of Italy, northern Africa, and Greece, and as early as 65 B.C. had conquered Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and the kingdom of the Seleucids. Pompey was thus recognized as king of kings. As Palestine would serve as a convenient base of operations in his further ambitious schemes, his covetous eyes fell on this region and in 63 B.C. Rome, "through a sea of blood," entered Jerusalem and for seven centuries following held the Jewish nation within her iron grasp.

2. As the first Christian century opens we find Palestine divided into three provinces, Judea, Galilee, and Perea. Samaria, because of its mongrel population, was not now considered Jewish territory. While the three Jewish provinces just mentioned were not inhabited wholly by people of Jewish blood, the Jews were so far in the ascendancy that the whole social and

religious life was essentially Jewish. Judea was the largest and most important of the three provinces, and her name came to designate the entire national area. All Jews felt that her soil was a sort of common heritage, especially in view of the fact that Jerusalem was located within her borders. This sacred city that had exercised such a peculiar power over the minds of the Hebrews during all of the dreary period of their political bondage, now became the focus of all of their political and religious thinking. Over the province of Judea Roman procurators were in authority, but they judged Jews strictly according to Jewish law. In fact, the Roman administration affected Jewish society very little. While all Jews were required to take the oath of allegiance to the emperor and while the procurator kept in his possession the robe of the high priest, these requirements were fully offset by the large religious liberty given the Jews, by protection guaranteed their temple, and by the general tolerance and regard shown their pronounced religious feelings. In most local matters the Jews were left to govern themselves. Their Sanhedrin was the "supreme court for all cases of importance—civil, criminal, and religious." However, in many things their liberties and welfare varied according to the character of the emperor and his subordinates who were immediately over them.

3. Altogether independent of the procurators were the tetrarchies over which the two sons of Herod were placed. The important one of these tetrarchies, and the only one with which our study is immediately concerned, was that of Galilee and Perea over which Herod Antipas ruled. This section of Palestine was inhabited by both Jews and Gentiles, but the Jews so predominated that the whole population was most punctual in the observance of Jewish feasts and Sabbaths. However, they were in such close contact with the Græco-Roman civilization that they were much broader and freer in their thought and mode of life than were the people of Judea proper. The character of their ruler, Herod Antipas, is most suggestively expressed in the word Jesus used to designate him—"that fox." To offset his ardent friendship for Rome and heathen customs, he attended Jewish feasts in Jerusalem and assumed an air of interest in the Jewish religion. He was, however, a man of uncommon ability as a ruler. Like his father he was a great builder and adorned his tetrarchy with splendid cities.

THE DISPERSION

1. As has already been suggested, it was a remnant of the Jewish people that came back to the Holy Land after the Babylonish captivity, the majority having

scattered over the world at large, so that by the time of the reign of Augustus every city in the Roman Empire had a large Jewish element, set off in a distinct Jewish quarter. These Jews of the "Dispersion" were commonly designated by those living in Judea as "Grecians." Nevertheless, in all of these foreign countries where they were settled they were as loyal to Judaism as were their brethren of Palestine, and regularly made their contributions to the maintenance of the temple. In their various communities they had their synagogues, their laws, their rabbis, and in Alexandria their temple. Wherever a Jew prayed he turned his face toward Jerusalem, and every one hoped that sometime he would have the high privilege of attending the Passover in that Holy City.

Thus through storm and stress, through bondage and oppression, through dissensions and bitter strife within their own ranks, we find the Jewish people at the beginning of the first Christian century retaining all of their distinctive national and religious characteristics, and possessed of an intensity of religious faith and expectancy that set them apart as "a peculiar people." Out of the furnace of affliction through which foreign nations, reeking with immorality, had compelled them to pass, it is not to be wondered at that they had such strong racial antipathy, and that, in the

light of their exalted monotheism and their higher ethical standards, they had such poignant contempt for all the heathen religions about them.

QUESTIONS

(These questions are designed simply as suggestions and aids to thought.)

1. What were some of the more pronounced effects of the Exile on the Jewish people?
2. After Alexander's conquest what was his main policy with regard to all of his subject people?
3. What was the effect of the Grecian culture on the Jewish people?
4. How were they saved from national and religious disintegration under the influence of this culture?
5. What was the general effect of the Maccabean Revolt?
6. What was the attitude of Rome toward the Jewish religion?
7. What difference is seen in the intellectual and religious life of the Jews of the Dispersion as compared with those who returned to the Holy Land?

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CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

WHILE, as we have already seen, Palestine was at the time of our present study settled both by Jews and the representatives of other races, the Jews constituted the larger part of the population and were socially the dominant race. It is, however, impossible to make an accurate estimate of the number of either Jews or foreigners at this time inhabiting the Holy Land. Some of the best authorities think there were never more than three million people at one time occupying the country west of the Jordan. There were many towns scattered over the country, but they were small, and Jerusalem itself, it is thought, could hardly have accommodated within its walls more than a hundred thousand souls. Palestine was not only a country of very limited area, but its capacity was further restricted by the fact that much of it was either so arid or so broken and rugged that it was neither inhabited nor cultivated. In such a land it would have been impossible for a large mass of people devoted to agricultural and pastoral pursuits to maintain themselves;

hence the excessive figures given by Josephus, and by later historians who relied on him for their information, are no longer taken as trustworthy.

EFFECT OF GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS

1. That a people so weak numerically, and located within such restricted territory, should have made so large a contribution to the history of the world is indicative of their peculiar racial hardihood and especially of their religious genius. And it is worthy of note that their geographical limitations and the natural peculiarities of their country had no little to do in determining their character and their social spirit. There was no land over which the great forces of history so frequently swept and that "was yet capable of preserving one tribe in national continuity and growth; one tribe learning and suffering and rising superior to the successive problems these forces presented to her, till upon the opportunity offered by the last of them, she launched with her results upon the world." These people, distinguished for their religious temperament, were settled in this little country near to and yet aloof from the main currents of human life, and at the same time were so located that they became the spectators of history's movements without becoming their victims, and they gathered within their own life all the

best experiences of that ancient world and transmitted them to the generations that followed. Their country was separated from Asia by the broad and forbidding desert and was thus saved from becoming, either in its religion or in its politics, a purely Eastern country. Separated also by a strip of desert from Egypt, it was protected from the immorality and the crass idolatry that characterized that land, while the "Great Sea" completely shut it in on the west. And yet the great nations, contending for world-supremacy, again and again invaded this sacred territory and fought for dominion over it. Through all of these inroads of other nations, the Jew, in spite of his isolation, had the cultural advantage of contact with all of the leading races of the world as he contended with them to the death for the things he held most dear.

2. The very effort required to resist these invasions and to surmount physical limitations developed and made conspicuous the unique moral force that characterized the Jew and made him so tenacious of his creed and so resolute in his devotion to his religion. A survey of this historic country, including its soil, its climate, and the general domestic and social life of the people, is important to the Bible student in interpreting Jewish life.

3. Within the compass of this little country there

are great contrasts of temperature, not only between different parts of the country, but also between summer and winter and between day and night. While the upland regions have a pleasant temperature during the summer, in the lowlands the heat is often most extreme. But taking it throughout the year, it is a most equable climate, and there are few healthier regions in all the world. It is claimed that a climate like that of the Holy Land "lends itself to the service of moral ideals." With its irregular rains and uncertain seasons the imagination stirs the soul to the realization of a Will behind nature upon whose benevolence man is entirely dependent for fruitful seasons and life-sustaining harvests. Thus the Spirit so used their climate as to make it a means of revealing the doctrine of a gracious providence, a doctrine that was deeply imbedded in the heart of this people during the period we are studying.

4. The majority of the people lived in villages, of which there were many scattered over the land; and as they were an agricultural and pastoral people they went forth each day to cultivate their fields and care for their flocks. As the plateaus and valleys were quite fertile, orchards and vineyards everywhere flourished and there were rich harvests of grain. While this village life narrowed their horizon and fostered a

provincial spirit, at the same time it gave opportunity for the cultivation of a beautiful family and community life, for learning the great lessons nature so richly offered, and for the development of the religious sense through communion with God.

5. Cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Cæsarea presented a sharp contrast to the small towns and villages. The splendid public buildings erected by the Herods and the Greek rulers at once caught the eye as they towered above the flat houses of the populace in the cities, while the villages were without public buildings, except synagogues, and their houses were mostly mean and unattractive. The walls were built of mud mixed with straw and baked in the sun. They had low flat roofs and a general appearance of primitive simplicity. Streets were narrow and badly kept, water was carried from distant springs or aqueducts, and there was the entire absence of any sort of sanitary arrangements.

THE FAMILY

1. The Jewish family is a most interesting study. From the days of Abraham the family as the unit of society had been emphasized and the careful instruction of children was regarded as the highest and most sacred duty. The family at the opening of the first

century was in the main monogamous, but polygamy seems to have been practiced to some extent during the New Testament period, being confined, however, to the wealthier class. While woman occupied a higher position in Jewish society than she did among other races, she was by no means accorded equal honor and like privileges with man. Indeed she was not given all the rights that belonged to certain classes of women in Roman society. She was not accorded the same educational opportunities as were provided for men and was always regarded as an essentially inferior sex. She was, however, allowed to go abroad freely and was not, as a rule, compelled to be entirely veiled.

2. According to rabbinical opinion woman's inferiority was due to the part she played in the Fall of the race. A number of miseries are catalogued by them as having thus been visited upon woman: "The covering of her head like one in mourning, the wearing of her hair long like Lilith, the boring of her ear like a slave, serving her husband like a maid-servant, and not being permitted to testify in court." However, the rabbis most heartily commended marriage and delighted in the praise of good and faithful wives. But to their way of thinking woman's world was to be strictly domestic—baking, washing, nursing children, and spinning and weaving. The perfect wife was

the hard-working, good housekeeper described in the book of Proverbs.

3. Betrothal was the first step in the formation of the marriage relation and was given a prominent place in the social life of the Jewish people. It indeed had the significance of an incomplete marriage. The terms of the betrothal were made either by the head of the house of the bridegroom, or by a friend who was authorized to represent him, and involved a real sale and purchase. The bride was given a piece of money and a legal document which contained certain pledges upon the part of the future husband. Then the so-called dowry was agreed upon and the payment, or part payment, of the same was made. While this dowry was regarded as the purchase-price of the bride, a sort of compensation to the family for the loss of a valuable member, it was nevertheless to be conserved as capital for the future benefit of the wife, and upon the death of the husband, or in the event of arbitrary divorce, it would serve a most useful purpose in meeting her needs.

4. After this financial phase of the betrothal was satisfactorily adjusted a public announcement was made by the prospective bridegroom, or by some one who represented him, that the betrothal had been consummated, and after this the two, if they so elected, could

live together as man and wife; and children that were born from a union thus effected were regarded by society as legitimate. Usually, however, the betrothal was followed after some time—often after the lapse of years, since young children and even infants were frequently betrothed—by an elaborate wedding occasion. In the later period of Jewish life there was a growing tendency to make a sharp distinction between the betrothal and the marriage, and to magnify the latter by investing it with the atmosphere of publicity and pomp. In the marriage proper, as we see it in the Bible, two features are conspicuous—the *procession* and the *feast*. These two features stand out in some of the parables of Jesus. In the procession the bridegroom and his friends marched to the home of the bride and then the festal party, increased by the friends of the bride, conducted the happy couple to their future home. There were high spirits and much color in this picturesque drama, as can be seen in both the Old and the New Testaments. The festivities frequently lasted for several days and the friends and guests gave vent to their jubilant feelings in song and dance, and often in boisterous hilarity. The marriage supper, which was given at the house of the husband, was the outstanding social event in the life of the family. At the close of the feast the bride was conducted to the

nuptial chamber by her parents. It is worth noting, as an explanation of how Laban's deception was successfully practiced on Jacob, that throughout this entire festal occasion the bride had to remain heavily veiled.

5. Divorce, in the early period of Jewish history, was quite easy for the man to obtain, about the only restriction thrown about him being the requirement that he must give his wife a "writing of divorcement" if he should wish to set her aside. This traditional prerogative held sway until a late period in Jewish life, when the protests of prophets and the legislation enacted through their influence in some degree checked the wrong social drift. Finally the higher conceptions of the wife's position and rights and of the sacredness of the marriage bond flowered into the perfect ethical conceptions of the Gospels. However, in New Testament times, in spite of prophetic protests that faintly echoed from a distant past, divorce was regarded as respectable and was quite common through the influence, no doubt, of the pagan life about them. Its privileges were mainly restricted to the husband, although there were exceptional cases in which the woman took the initiative.

6. Jewish parents considered children a great blessing. This was due not only to the need for their labor in tilling the soil and for their service in case of war,

but more especially to that normal social ideal that made strong the parental instinct. Hannah's deep longing for a son was the expression of a racial attitude toward children. The father was supreme over his children, having the power of life and death. The utmost respect and obedience were exacted toward both father and mother and the strictest domestic discipline prevailed. The long period of suckling—from two to three years—made very intimate and strong the bond between mother and child. The religious instruction enjoined in Exodus and Deuteronomy was probably given in the main by the mother, but such emphasis was given it that we may believe the father supplemented the mother's work at every possible opportunity. From the days of Abraham on down into the Christian era the Jewish family was essentially a religious institution. It was a little "society bound together by common religious observances," and existing for the purpose of keeping alive and making effective certain great religious ideals. In Deuteronomy we have it proclaimed as a law: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." According to this commandment the home was to be so charged with the spirit

and truths of religion that the child could not escape them, and this law was no doubt recognized and in operation in Jewish homes from the earliest days of their history. The reason given for God's selection of Abraham as the founder of the chosen people was that he had in him the elements of a great father, a commanding teacher of religion: "I know him that he will command his household after him." The three hundred and eighteen "trained men" who went forth with him to battle after having been educated and disciplined "in his house," and no doubt directly under his supervision and discipline, give evidence of the importance of the home as the center of moral and religious training. And reading between the lines the story of Samuel's early training, what a vision we get of religious instruction and discipline at the home altar! What a conception Hannah must have had of the solemn duties and infinite potentialities involved in the moral and religious education of the home! A similar view of the educational and religious function of the home seems to have been commonly accepted by the Jewish people.

SCHOOLS

1. In addition to this careful home instruction there were also community schools established and main-

tained for the one purpose of supplementing the religious instruction given in the home. Josephus and other early Jewish writers give us unmistakable evidence of the existence from a very early date of a system of schools for the instruction of the young in the law and religion of the Hebrews, and these schools were everywhere an essential feature of the Jewish community at the beginning of the Christian era. For pupils from five to ten years of age the Bible text only was used in these schools. From ten to fifteen years of age the studies also included the Hebrew traditions. Beyond that age the youth could take part in the endless discussions of the rabbis over the details of their traditional system. These elementary schools were held daily, except on the Sabbath, while the sessions of the synagogue schools were held on Monday and Thursday in addition to the Sabbath session. These schools were under the supervision of the rabbis who whispered into the ears of those who assisted them the answers to be given to important questions. The manner of giving instruction was mainly catechetical and pupils were encouraged in asking questions and thus thinking for themselves. The work attempted in these schools was so thorough that Josephus says, "If any one of us should be questioned concerning the laws, he would more easily repeat all than his own name."

2. These schools were recognized as a vital feature of the religious system and national life of the Hebrews. This is evident from a number of proverbial sayings that have come down from those days. Thus for example: "The world continues to exist only by the breath of the children of the schools." "The children must not be detained from the schools, even though it were to help rebuild the temple." "If you would destroy the Jews, you must destroy their schools." "He who refuses a pupil one lesson has, as it were, robbed him of his parental inheritance."

OCCUPATIONS

1. The stories in the Old Testament that give pictures of a primitive industrial period are not to be taken as characterizing the more advanced civilization of the New Testament period. Outside of the large cities the people were mostly engaged in agricultural and pastoral employment. They were acquainted with many of the best methods of agriculture known at that period, and their well-cultivated vineyards, grain fields, olive groves, and fruit orchards were seen in all parts of their country. Their harvests, beginning about the middle of April, were finished within two months, and the harvest seasons originated

and gave significance to their great religious feasts—the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

2. In New Testament times there was a slowly developing commercial life, and while it was mainly carried on by the Greek part of the population, still an increasing number of the Jews were drawn into this more profitable employment. This entrance of the Jewish people into the commercial struggle was the cause of deep sorrow to the rabbis and led the great Hillel to declare, “He who engages in business cannot become a sage.” They exported certain products—balsam, figs, olive oil, salt, etc.—and there were many fancy food products and articles of dress and general luxury that were imported. The fish trade from the Sea of Galilee was quite extensive and other commercial enterprises existed.

3. Manual trades were considered quite honorable pursuits and it was regarded as the duty of the parent to have the son educated in one of these occupations. It was claimed that every rabbi had his trade, a claim that throws light on Paul’s having the humble trade of tent-making. Such a variety of trades are mentioned in Jewish literature as to indicate a rather highly developed industrial life; and the workers in some of these industries had found it necessary to organize

themselves somewhat after the manner of our modern trades-unions.

4. The Jews were also well represented in the professions. There were two classes of lawyers, those who practiced only in Jewish courts and those who confined their practice to Roman courts. As there was great fear of defilement from touching a dead body it is probable that medical knowledge was scant among the Jews, but there were notwithstanding a great many Jews in the medical profession. At its best, however, medical knowledge at the beginning of the Christian period was crude and almost wholly unscientific. As evil spirits were generally believed to be the cause of disease, it was natural and logical to resort to charms and exorcisms to get rid of sickness.

5. The arts among the Jews received scant attention. A grossly literal interpretation of the Decalogue created an intense religious prejudice against the making of graven images, and all forms or representations of living creatures were considered violations of the law. Hence, there is nothing to indicate any special development in architecture, sculpture, or painting in any of the discovered ruins of Palestine. Considerable attention, however, was given to music and it was developed to a high degree of perfection.

POLITICAL LIFE

As has already been shown, the Jewish people were accorded large political freedom and were allowed almost complete management of their own affairs. The theocratic idea of government so colored and determined all of their thinking that they made no distinction between their political and religious life. Hence, all governmental affairs were carried on through ecclesiastical organizations. Back in the days of their kings they regarded them as having been divinely chosen and appointed; and in New Testament times, when they had no king of their own choosing, the high priest was the supreme head of their local government. Thus their religion and their politics were affectively blended.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the peculiar physical limitations on the life of the Jewish people and what were their effects on the character and life of these people?
2. What is the significance of the family in the life of a people?
3. What were the striking features in the family life of the ancient Jewish people?
4. What part does the school have in molding the life of a nation?
5. What provision did the Jews make for the education of their children?

6. What place did religion have in the work of these schools?

7. What effect do the occupations of a people have on their life in general?

8. How far can you trace the effect of the daily work of life on the thinking and the character of the Jews?

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CHAPTER III

RELIGIONS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE murder of Julius Cæsar in the year 44 B.C. left the Roman world without a controlling mind, and as a result disorder that was almost anarchy reigned throughout the Empire. Rome's enemies swept down upon her borders, while among her own people were petty factional fights, bloody massacres, and frequent robbery. Indeed conditions were so bad as to lead one of her great moralists to say: "Right and wrong are confounded; so many wars the world over, so many forms of wrong; no worthy honor is left to the plow; the husbandmen are marched away and the fields grow dirty; the hook has its curve straightened into the sword-blade." The absence of a strong personality in control of the government had given the occasion for the discovery of the absence of all moral standards among the people and the entire lack of moral self-restraint. Notwithstanding the marvelous extension of the Roman government and the growth of her political power, the character of the people of this vast empire had been declining for a hundred years

and a slow but continuous process of disintegration had been gradually undermining the State. The sacredness of life and property was almost wholly disregarded and murder was employed as a chief means of political success. Civil war again and again swept over the State.

A DEEP SENSE OF THE NEED OF RELIGION

1. These were the unhappy conditions obtaining when Augustus Cæsar became emperor of Rome. On every hand the main question that was engaging the minds of thoughtful people was: What is the root of all this evil? What is the disease that is eating into the vitals of the Empire? Why is it that the patriotism and honesty that characterized the people in olden days are wanting, and that such degeneracy and immorality are everywhere prevalent? These were the anxious questions engaging the minds of patriots, statesmen, poets, and moralists. It was not long till the answer to these questions seemed to be at hand: history began to assist them in finding the reason for this moral decline. A Greek thinker two hundred years before, in contrasting the Greek and Roman civilizations as they then were, said: "The most important difference for the better which the Roman Commonwealth appears to me to display is in their religious beliefs, for I conceive

that what in other nations is looked upon as a reproach, I mean a scrupulous fear of the gods, is the very thing which keeps the Roman Commonwealth together." Thus through the light of history their thinkers began to discover their corruption of morals, and general disregard for law and order had grown out of a fading interest in religion, and a loss of faith in the gods. The fear of the gods, although created and cultivated by a false religion, was indispensable, so these men gradually discovered, as a means of deterring the masses from lawlessness and immorality. This view of the value of religion to the State was an old one among the Greeks, and now in the midst of their lawless social condition the strong men of Rome began to see that what they needed was the reawakening of the religious sense of their people by the restoration of faith in the gods.

2. Augustus, soon after he came to the throne, saw clearly the danger to the State of this abounding lawlessness and lust, and set himself the task of discovering the most effective means of counteracting it. He was soon led to a profound belief in the general value of religion to the State, especially as a means of preventing crime and disorder. The nature of the gods that were worshiped and the general principles of the religion were not matters of concern to him; so he be-

came hospitable to almost every form of religion and gave to all of them his energetic support. To the mind of the Emperor, and to the leading thinkers of his reign, the dependableness of the individual citizen and the integrity of the State were vitally related to the restraints and standards of religion. It was thus a deep conviction that led Augustus to give his personal and official support to the establishment in the Empire of the more popular religions of his day. In his autobiographical sketch he mentions the temples he built for the worship of the various gods of his day—temples to Apollo, to Quirinus, to Jupiter Feretrius, to Jove the Thunderer, to the Lares, to the Penates, to Youth, to the Great Mother. He also records how he dedicated vast sums to religion and how he restored the despoiled temples of Asia. We are also told of his “increasing the numbers, dignity, and allowances of the priests,” of his restoration of ancient ceremonies, of his celebration of festivals and holy days.

3. As the Emperor was ably supported in his views of the value of religion to the State by many of the intellectuals of his day, the report of the multiplicity of the gods throughout the Roman Empire and of the general devotion of the people to cult and ritual is easily credible. No one without careful study can realize “how crowded the whole life was with cult,

ritual, and usage; how full of divinations, petty, pleasing, or terrible." "When," asks Augustine, "can I ever mention in one passage of this book all the names of gods and goddesses, which they have scarcely been able to compass in great volumes, seeing that they allot to every individual thing the special function of some divinity?" Every spring, well and tree came to be regarded as a temple of a god, so that the whole countryside was alive with gods; and still closer to the people were the Lares—household gods—for which there was a little shrine on every hearth. To the minds of these people the whole expanse of nature was teeming with mysterious invisible beings.

SUPERSTITION AND MORAL DECAY

Whatever advantages these multiplied gods and forms of religion may have lent the Emperor in carrying out reforms and establishing his authority throughout his vast Empire, it is not surprising that superstitions so gross should lead to belief in magic, in enchantment, in astrology, in witchcraft; and such faith inevitably hurried the people to deeper moral decay as men became less capable of thought and less disposed to think. Hence, we see here in Rome a political life which after passing through a long process of development is now disintegrating and decaying in

spite of the Emperor's vigorous efforts to save it through faith in false gods and by means of religions that are nothing more than superstitions.

4. Emperor-worship was encouraged by the ruling class to meet certain political needs. It was important, they thought, to develop in the mind of the people the sense of the political unity of the Empire, and this unity of course centered in the person of the Emperor himself. Hence the ancient idea, that had its roots far back in Oriental life, of recognizing the ruler as divine and as therefore due the worship of all his subjects, was revived and emphasized. Julius Cæsar was declared to be "The God and Dictator and Saviour of all the World," and succeeding rulers were paid similar homage.

Since the character of the gods men worship vitally influences their conduct, the dissolute lives that characterized most of these Emperors must have contributed very powerfully toward the downward moral trend of the people at large.

5. The Mystery Religions were popular throughout the Empire and exerted a far-reaching influence, since they came more nearly than any other of the pagan religions to meeting the deeper longing of the heart. The emphasis of these religions was on the idea of help from without for the struggling individ-

ual, and the possibility of his coming into touch with saving power beyond himself. They had varied mystic rites through which they claimed that they came into communion with the gods, and through these ceremonies a very powerful appeal was made to the emotions. As these mysteries had their origin back in the primitive age of man, they were a strange medley of sensuality and of the finest idealism of Greek culture. While they often appealed to the baser passions, they also held out the idea of high fellowship with both the gods and man. Hence Cicero said of them: "In the mysteries we perceive the principles of real life and learn not only to live happily, but we die with a fairer hope."

GREEK PHILOSOPHIES

Greek philosophy also made a notable contribution to the religious ideas current at the opening of the first Christian century. This is especially seen in the doctrines and influence of the Stoics and the Epicureans.

1. *The Stoics*.—These were men of exceptional independence and elevation of thought. To them the essential thing in religion was some form of direct communion with the divine, the establishment of a real union between the worshiper and a holier and more powerful being. And this implied a divinity of

a higher order and a wider range of activity than those of the gods of the current superstitions. They seem never to have agreed on any very definite conception of this "divinity," or "providence," that ruled in the affairs of men, but contented themselves with a merely vague feeling that there was something other and higher than man "that shapes our ends," and this feeling was often expressed in purely pantheistic terms. Matter, force, mind, man, deity were all united in their thinking, matter and force being the two ultimate principles, while the term "deity" stood for the working force in the universe. Some of them, however, so idealized Jupiter that he embodied to a considerable degree the monotheistic idea and thus became the center of a religion of a much higher character and with a much more inspiring appeal than the common faith and practice of the people.

2. There were distinguished poets and philosophers who gave themselves to the exposition and glorification of this form of religion. "Jupiter," they said, "is all that you see and all that lives within you." "There is a providence," they insisted, "that rules human and all other affairs; nothing happens that is not appointed; and to this providence every man is related." As for the individual they said, "The god has put in his possession the best thing of all, the master thing," which

they called the "rational faculty," and by means of this faculty they thought man can always live in conformity with nature. Thus living in harmony with nature he fulfills the true end of his life and has perfect happiness. Every one therefore must yield himself to this inward power and let it determine his conduct, and in so doing nothing could harm him. If, however, this should fail in one's life to result happily, and he can no longer endure his existence, let him at once end it.

3. This religion led to frequent self-examination and to most severe self-discipline. Seneca, one of its leading exponents, said, "This is the one goal of my days and of my nights: this is my task, my thought—to put an end to my old faults"; and this was possibly characteristic of the men generally who belonged to his school of thought. It is said of Seneca that he never tried to deceive himself concerning the extreme difficulties of his ideals, and never attempted to fool himself about things that he could not believe, and while he was a man with a tender, pure, true heart, it is thought he never reached that inner peace that he thought his religion offered. However, there were experiences in his life in which he appeared to be so much under the Spirit's influence that he became almost prophetic in his conceptions of God. In one of these moods we hear him saying, "God is near you,

with you, within you. . . . None is a good man without God."

4. It is obvious that Stoicism was too much a matter of intellect and reason to take hold of the masses of the people. The individual was isolated from his fellows and from God and was made to think solely of his self-sufficiency: "You must exercise the will and the thing is done, it is set right." "Make yourself happy." Of course prayer would have no place in such a view of life. To the common herd, therefore, with their limited self-control and their incapacity for deep introspection and prolonged concentration, this religion could make only a mocking appeal.

Furthermore, in their efforts at suppression they destroyed some of the finer qualities of life, qualities that are vital to any form of happy social life. Their doctrine required that the affections be suppressed, that the holy instinct of conjugal and parental love be "brought to the test of reason." The emotions of friendship, pity, and sympathy were to be so constantly restrained and negated that these fine qualities of the soul would be weakened, if not destroyed. Thus instead of preparing men for entering into life's social relationships and living harmoniously and helpfully with their fellow men, Stoicism had a tendency to disqualify them for the more intimate social fellowships.

5. Stoicism failed altogether to take into account that moral impotency in human life that led Paul to cry out: "For not what I would, that do I practice; but what I hate, that do I." It therefore made no provision for men with broken wills and carried no hope for men with enslaved lives. Hence Stoicism put no check on general wrongdoing and did nothing toward restraining the downward drift.

2. *Epicurean Philosophy*.—The Epicurean philosophy is also considered a form of religion in this empire of religions; and with its lax view of human conduct and its simpler appeal to the human mind, it no doubt influenced a much larger number of the people than did Stoicism. The advocates of this system taught that pleasure, or happiness, is the chief end of man; and while some of the more choice minds among its advocates insisted that happiness was found only in self-restraint, in correct living according to honor and the dictates of conscience, the license of the times and the misconceptions and exaggerations of its devotees corrupted these better teachings of the system and transformed the whole into a mode of gross self-indulgence that was correctly characterized by the easy-going maxim, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." One of their writers thus gives expression to their faith: "I will swear,

both now and always, crying aloud to all, Greeks and barbarians, that pleasure is the object of the best mode of life, while the virtues, which these people now unreasonably meddle with, are by no means an objective, but contributory to the objective."

THE HEART OF MAN STILL HUNGERING

We thus see a state of society in the Roman Empire in which there were the most diverse views of life, in which all forms of religion were permitted, and in which there were general confusion of mind and shameful decay of morals. The entire drift in history that had resulted in the establishment of imperial Rome had created in the nations concerned a "profligacy which probably has had no parallel in the annals of the race." Their condition is accurately as well as admirably expressed by Paul; "Having no hope and without God in the world."

"On that hard, pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

While Rome had, in many respects, improved the material welfare of the masses, there were, nevertheless, such an alarming lack of self-restraint, such an increasing disregard of human rights, such growing

strife and cruelty in all human relations that the more thoughtful men of the day were haunted with fears concerning the future of the Empire. "Life was terrible in its fears and in its pleasures." In attempting to use the restraints of religion to strengthen governmental authority, the ruling class had really added to the lawlessness and dissoluteness of the people by the unworthy and essentially degrading forms of religion that were introduced and encouraged.

Then these pagan religions utterly failed to meet the deeper spiritual needs and longings of the people. There was an eager hungering for a religion that would satisfy both the reason and the emotions. The heart of man was crying for a Deity with whom there could be fellowship and who could bring the assurance of salvation from the rank self-indulgence that was destroying both the individual and society.

JEWISH FAITH STEADFAST

In the midst of this welter of superstitions and this unrest of soul we find the Jewish people holding tenaciously to the fundamental religious conceptions handed down to them from their ancestors. The political ideals, the social customs, the moral standards, the varied systems of philosophy found in the diversely colored life of Rome—all of these had so impinged

upon the life of these children of Abraham as to color their views about many matters; but their cardinal religious ideas and their devotion to their ancient rites and ceremonies remained unchanged. "O Jerusalem, if I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning"—this exclamation may be taken as the real expression of the mental and spiritual attitude of this people toward the God of their fathers and toward the "law of Moses." In Jerusalem the temple service was carried on about as it had been in the days of Solomon, while sacred days and special seasons were observed with old-time regularity and devotion. Thus Judaism withstood the paganizing influences that everywhere prevailed and held aloft her higher idealism and her nobler system of ethics.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the moral conditions of the Roman Empire at the beginning of the first Christian century?
2. What effect does religion have on the morals of a nation?
3. Why were the various heathen religions in the Roman Empire unable to improve the morals of the people?
4. To what extent can a religious system like Stoicism that emphasizes self-discipline and a mere philosophy of life elevate the morals of the masses of the people?
5. Why were there so many forms of religion in the Roman Empire at the opening of the first Christian century?

6. What effect has the character of the god whom a people worship on their moral conduct?

7. In what particulars was the Jewish religion at this time different from the other religions of the Empire?

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CHAPTER IV

JUDAISM IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES

JUDAISM OF THE DISPERSION

1. The long years of separation between the Dispersion and the Palestinian Jews brought about the development of two different types of Judaism. While those who had been for generations scattered over the world still regarded themselves as being a part of God's chosen people and maintained the characteristic devotion to the religion of their fathers, their more intimate contact with the religions of the world in some degree colored their views and modified their religious practices. They taught that the vital things in Judaism were faith in the one true God and a life of moral purity and uprightness. The former rigor of ceremonial requirements was softened and the great ethical principles of their religion were magnified. Thus their narrower conceptions of Jehovah's relations to the world gave way to broader and more spiritual views. Their minds gradually opened to the truth that the God of their fathers was with them in their distant homes, that he was the God of the whole earth, and that

through his over-ruling of human affairs the fearful misfortunes that had befallen them could be made to purify them and to develop them for their predestined achievements. Of course this change took place in only a small remnant, but it was this remnant that determined the type of Judaism that Paul later found in the great centers of the Roman Empire.

2. While living in the atmosphere of Babylonian learning the latent literary genius of a number of their more choice minds was quickened, and, under the pressure of their sore afflictions, their hearts so opened to the inspiration of the Spirit that new visions of God and of life became possible to them. They therefore essayed the task of interpreting the great lessons their afflictions were intended to teach and of transmitting to their people these interpretations in written form. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God they took the grim facts of their past and present life and in a most luminous way brought out their moral and religious significance. The emergence of this remarkable literature gave to the world some of the richest material that now enters into our Old Testament Scriptures.

3. These Jews became active in carrying on a propaganda in behalf of their religious views, and this not simply among their own people. Their writers availed themselves of the use of all the varied forms of litera-

ture to create among the people at large a sympathetic attitude toward their religion. Books were written in the name of Greek and Latin philosophers and poets long since dead, declaring faith in the God of the Jews and commending Judaism as a moral and religious system. These Jewish scholars set up high claims for their religion. Judaism, they insisted, was the highest form of philosophy, and they attempted to show that out of their Scriptures had come all the truth that had been taught by the sages of the world. Through their allegorical method of interpreting the Old Testament they easily drew from it all the truths taught by Socrates and Plato and even insisted that all the wisdom of those wise Grecians came from the teaching of Moses. The Sibylline Oracles constitute the most remarkable collection of these pseudonymous writings.

JUDAISM IN PALESTINE

The Judaism of Palestine at the opening of the first Christian century was most pronounced in its type and intense in its spirit. The sufferings to which the people had been subjected by the inroads and oppressions of other nations had deepened their national consciousness and enhanced in their minds the value and glory of their religion. While other nations had their histories, the Jews looked back through the sweep of the centuries

over a most marvelous racial record. Since the days of Abraham they had been the people of Jehovah's special love and care. He had miraculously delivered them from bondage; he had established them in the Holy Land and strangely protected them and prospered them; he had "committed unto them the oracles of God" and had anointed and sent among them a line of prophets whose moral standards and high idealism challenged the conscience of both Jew and Gentile. Through the centuries they had stood for an exalted type of monotheism. "The great God above all gods"—a personal God who knew and who cared—was their God. Hence their contempt for heathen religions, whose pagan rites and degraded morals were everywhere flaunted before their eyes, and their peculiar sense of their own dignity and superior moral worth. Thus the Jews in Judea grew more exclusive, more severe and unrelenting in their spirit under the constant pressure of the Græco-Roman world. The points of contact with Gentiles that were supposed to bring defilement were constantly increased and the line of cleavage daily widened between them and the other races that were at this time inhabiting their beloved land. Devotion to their ritual was maintained while their endless traditions were regularly taught and their observance solemnly enjoined.

THE SYNAGOGUE

At this period the synagogue was the center from which religious instruction proceeded. This institution came into being in the days of the Babylonian captivity. Separated from the land of their fathers and from the sacred temple, the people began to assemble in their respective communities on each returning Sabbath and there recite passages from their Law or some of the burning messages from their prophets. Thus the spirit of their religion and the bond of brotherhood were kept alive during that trying period. The term synagogue came to be applied either to the building in which they met or to the institution itself, and as the Jews were scattered among the people of the earth this center of religious fellowship and instruction was regarded as a vital part of their community life. It was also used as a school for their children and youth. The synagogue thus came to be a most significant institution in the life of the people—the rallying point of their devotion and the most effective means of spreading their religious views.

THE SADDUCEES

There were two parties that greatly influenced the interests and character of Judaism, the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees arose in the second cen-

ture before Christ in opposition to the Maccabean party and in the first century had become a party of skeptical aristocrats. They adhered to the general principles of the Mosaic law, but rejected the oral traditions and did not believe in the immortality of the soul or the existence of spirits. Their position was not attractive to the masses of the people in the period of our present study, and they numbered only a few thousand. Their influence on Judaism was not widely felt.

THE PHARISEES

1. The real soul of Judaism at this time was Pharisaism. This party had descended from the Chasidim, the original patriots among the Jews in their struggles against foreign foes, and was the pronounced religious group among their people. They differed from the latitudinarian Sadducees in their strict loyalty to their own nation, and also in certain doctrinal questions, such as belief in providence, the existence of angels, immortality, the resurrection, the freedom of the will, and the coming of the Messiah. The main impulse that had called this party into existence seems to have been a desire for greater purity of life, which, as they interpreted it, grew out of a stricter devotion to all of the rites and ceremonies of their religion. It was this that gave to them their name, "the Separatists." Their

leaders gave themselves industriously to the study of the law and insisted on the most punctilious observance of all of its requirements. There had also grown out of their study of their law a constantly increasing mass of oral interpretations and commandments, which came to be known as "traditions," and which were placed alongside the law as equally binding and authoritative. God was the original giver of all of these laws and the welfare and salvation of the people depended upon their unhesitating obedience to the rules the rabbis attached to the daily life. Sacrifices, feasts, ritual, pilgrimages, offerings of tithes, rigid Sabbath restrictions—these were enjoined as the vital elements in their religion.

2. Both in theory and in practice Pharisaism gave emphasis to the negative side of life. "Thou shalt not" was the dominant note in its appeal to both old and young. Withdrawal from contact with the multitude of things that, according to their interpretation, brought defilement was made a fundamental duty; and this led to endless washings of dishes, of utensils, of the hands and person, and to a studied isolation of themselves from the common folk about them. Naturally, this resulted in the creation of a sect, a church within a church, a sort of "holier than thou" group, whose spirit became intolerant and whose piety became

offensively obtrusive. They delighted in praying on street corners that they might be seen of men. It is not surprising to learn from some of the things that Jesus said of them that there were many hypocrites among them, for such a scheme of life would have a strong tendency to beget the spirit of hypocrisy. There were, however, sincere, heroic souls among them, men who were living in all good conscience toward God.

3. Starting with its rabbinical assumptions, Pharisaism, with its exacting spirit and endless details, was a natural development. If man is to be saved by accumulating commandments and restrictions, then his life must consist of ceaseless inhibitions and a continuous effort to make conduct conform to a complicated system of rules. This was the "yoke" against which Peter protested when he declared that "neither we nor our fathers were able to bear" it. The insistence that righteousness was obtained solely through unfailing observance of the Mosaic Law, while rabbinical interpretation was constantly adding to the duties involved, was most discouraging to faith and deadening to intelligent religious hopes.

4. The carrying out of the idea of "the separated ones," which was the real significance of Pharisaism, had the practical effect of creating a sharp division be-

tween them and the great body of their orthodox fellow countrymen. However willing the common people may have been to acknowledge the validity and binding force of the minute prescriptions with regard to Levitical purity and the use of foods, strict observance was for them impossible. The daily tasks, to which they were driven by the necessities of life, made contact with many of these forbidden things inevitable. But in the eyes of the regular Pharisees all such were to be regarded as unclean, and in order to forestall any risk of defilement they avoided as far as possible all intercourse with this class. They held that genuine Israelites were those, and only those, who scrupulously observed both the written and the oral law, with special emphasis on Levitical purity, tithes, and the regular religious performances. The rest of the people—the great mass of the Jews—were simply the common herd. Hence the heartless words: “This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed.” This throws light on the bitter criticisms heaped on Jesus because of his free intercourse with publicans and sinners. Their demand for ceremonial and outward purity created also a determination to make Judea an isolated commonwealth, removed, as far as it was possible, from all danger of contamination with heathen life.

5. But in spite of its religious exclusiveness

Pharisaism cannot be considered a "sect" in the full sense of that word. In their public worship they had to meet the regular Jewish community on a common basis. They must worship in the temple and in the synagogue alongside the great mass of their fellow countrymen, since they all held in common the same general doctrines and were all alike the sons of Abraham. This enables us to understand in part the fact that, notwithstanding their undemocratic spirit as shown in their effort to avoid social defilement, they ultimately became the most popular and influential party among the Jewish people. Even the Roman rulers and the high priests had to recognize their superior influence and power. The multitude was with them and finally officials of the Sadducean party had to come to their terms in matters of state. Even when the high priest was still the head of the Sanhedrin and the Sadducees were probably in the majority in that body, the Pharisees were the real rulers in determining religious questions. Other things entered into this popular favor. Notwithstanding their offensive self-righteousness they were not as undemocratic and as unapproachable as were the Sadducees, they persistently cultivated national hatred toward the Romans, and their appeal to the Law commanded the respect of many who despised their petty restrictions and endless casuistries.

6. It is easy to misunderstand the patriotism of the Pharisees. Theirs was a religious patriotism. What they longed for was not the establishment of a merely independent, secular kingdom of their beloved Israel, but a cleansed people, an Israel transformed through the observance of the whole law, a nation from which all sinners were excluded and over which God reigned in the person of his representative. After their repeated and humiliating defeats by other nations most of them were now looking for the setting up of such a kingdom, not by political methods, but by the direct intervention of Jehovah; and the one way in which they thought they could prepare the way for and hasten this divine intervention was by emphasizing the law and strictly carrying out its commands.

7. Meanwhile the Gentile order under which they were living was to be recognized as a chastisement for their people's violations of their law and must for the time be endured; still it was held to be violation of the sovereignty of God over his own people. The one and only rightful king of Israel was God, and there could be no legitimate ruler except God's vicegerent, a son of David. Hence the rule of the Herods and of the Romans was most grievous to the Pharisees, and they constantly fanned the flames of hatred toward

Rome until it finally burst forth in a conflagration that swept the Jews out of the country.

8. Thus the Pharisees so stamped their views and ways of life upon the whole social and religious life of the Jews that Judaism and Pharisaism came to be almost synonymous terms. And this dominant spirit was extremely provincial and intolerant. The Pharisee worshiped instruments. Institutions, customs, ancient traditions were of far more significance to him than were men, or the real truths about life. He was, both in temperament and training, a traditionalist, and was always looking for precedent and listening for the voices of the distant past. His God was the God of Israel, who had spoken to his fathers in the long ago and had hated and overthrown their enemies. But of God as a being of high ethical principles, he had the most inadequate conception; and that God was now immanent in all the affairs of human life never entered the current of his thought. Doctrines, rites, ceremonies—to these he gave his utmost loyalty and upon those who did not accept and observe them he was ready to visit the severest penalties. The tithing of mint and anise was of much greater importance to him than were justice and mercy, and adherence to his trivial Sabbath restrictions, than was the healing of one who for many years had been bound by disease. Thus

Judaism, in the atmosphere in which Christianity was to be cradled, was cold and hard, critical and cruel. This spirit later reveals itself most strikingly in the conduct of the Sanhedrin and other officials toward both Jesus and Paul.

UNSPIRITUAL TONE OF JUDAISM

1. Judaism at this time was seriously lacking in high idealism. This may be especially observed in its views and customs with regard to tithing. To their flocks and herds, to the produce from their fields, and even to their garden vegetables, the tithing law was most rigidly applied. But to what end and for what purpose? First, because this was the immediate condition to material prosperity. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing"—cried the prophet, and the blessing, as Judaism was then interpreting it, was to be more abundant crops and more fruitful flocks. Then this tithe was to be used in their own interest—in defraying their temple expenses and in feeding and caring for their poor. That this view of the tithe was one of the special factors in both developing and revealing their hypocrisy, is made evident in the language with which Jesus tore off their disguise and left bare their pettiness and ghastly selfishness. Thus Judaism at this period was

largely bereft of the spirituality that characterized their fathers and inspired their great prophets.

2. But there was another side to Judaism. Notwithstanding the moral defects and the doctrinal hardness and narrowness we have just reviewed, there were teachers among the Jews who went behind all of their casuistry to the fundamental things in their religion and gave a spiritual and constructive view of life, while they also insisted on a freer and more neighborly intercourse with those among whom they lived. These teachers insisted that the essence of Judaism was simply faith in the one true God and a life of purity and uprightness: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" These views made a strong appeal to thoughtful and earnest-minded men and seemed to offer the help that was needed for their distraught and blinded world. There was also a growing tendency upon the part of these more thoughtful leaders to tone down the rigor of their ceremonial requirements and thus soften and make more attractive their religion. Thus their pure monotheism and their finer ethical ideas were made to have a more winsome appeal to the conscience and the common sense of the more thoughtful among the other races about them.

3. This larger and more attractive view of their

religion was due to the insight and sublime idealism of the great prophets. Indeed the remarkable vitality of Judaism, weighted as it was with rabbinical narrowness and casuistry, was due to the unconquerable spirit and the burning messages that had come down to them from the prophets. These were men who, under divine illumination, had been freed from the intellectual restrictions of legalism and ritualism, and had discovered that great principles determine the history and destiny of both individuals and nations. Instead of interpreting religion in terms of petty rules and rites, instead of thinking of God as a Being pledged simply to the task of making Israel prosperous and politically dominant, these men saw him as the God of the whole earth and a Being of infinite righteousness; and they realized that religion must be interpreted in the terms of those great principles of righteousness which have to do with the inner life—the motives, the purposes, the desires. They therefore declared that when the people failed to harmonize their lives with these inexorable principles they must suffer and go down in defeat, while true repentance and loyalty to God would bring deliverance from their entanglements and establish them as “the chosen of the Lord.”

4. This prophetic spirit glorified the Messianic hope that oppression and repeated defeat had awakened, and,

freeing it from Pharisaic fanaticism, expressed it sometimes in terms of the "kingdom of the saints" and again in the terms of an individual deliverer, "The Anointed of God." In either case they believed that through this Messiah God would sweep away the evils that were afflicting them and would establish in righteousness a kingdom that would have no end. The persistent and progressive conception of the Messianic hope, that ran like a golden thread through the religion of the more spiritual of the Jewish people, was due to this noble group of inspired prophets. There was wide difference of view among the people as to how the Messianic kingdom was to be realized. Some looked for its establishment through organization and force, while others, despairing of success through any sort of political means, confidently awaited divine intervention in the form of some fearful cataclysm that would end the old order and establish the true kingdom. However vague and fanatical the Messianic hope may have been in the mind of the masses, the clear-eyed prophets insisted that the God of their fathers was to triumph and reign in righteousness, and something of this exalted conception was at the center of the hope that possessed every Jewish mind in the first Christian century and made every Jewish heart expectant.

Faith and loyalty toward the God of their fathers, notwithstanding the collapse of many cherished expectations, and a tenacious hold on certain great moral principles, despite an environment noted for its paganism and immorality, make Judaism the outstanding religion of the ancient world. God had revealed to her certain fundamental truths and principles that the human heart could never relinquish, and the soil was thus prepared for the planting of that final form of religion through which all the nations of the earth are to be so graciously blessed.

QUESTIONS

1. What was it that called the Pharisaic party into existence?
2. What did Pharisaism stand for?
3. Who were the Sadducees and how did they differ from the Pharisaic party?
4. Why did Pharisaism stamp itself so conspicuously on the life of Judaism?
5. What were the outstanding and most dangerous tendencies of Pharisaism?
6. What is the great danger in making religion to consist in a system of rules and rites?
7. What attitude did the great prophets assume toward a religion of rites and mere routine?

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CHAPTER V

THE MORE IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

THE most momentous event in the history of the race was the birth of Christianity. It marks such a distinct turn in the tide of human affairs that modern civilization traces to it its origin, and all of the formative forces that have been contributing to the making of a better world are found rooted in this religion. It is difficult for us to realize how radically it has changed man's views concerning God and transformed his whole outlook on life. As Dr. Glover has expressed it: "Jesus Christ came to men as a great new experience. He took them far outside all they had known of God and of man. He led them, historically, into what was in truth a new world, into a new understanding of life in all its relations." For such an epochal event we may reasonably look for a long process of providential preparation traceable through the great movements of history, since this "from the foundation of the world" has been the

"One far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Since Christianity is defined as "the doctrines and teachings of Jesus Christ," we may for the purposes of this chapter say that it had its birth when Jesus gathered a group of disciples about him and began to reveal his mind to them and to start them out in his way of life. The birth of Christianity was therefore the beginning of the unfolding of a great body of truth and the starting of a mighty spiritual movement, and these were to reach and vitally affect the whole structure of human life. For such a daring adventure the most opportune time in history must have been chosen.

1. The extension of the Roman Empire and its strong centralized government may be regarded, in a sense, as providential means in preparing the world for the birth and growth of Christianity. In the crude stage of human life at that time it seems that an autocratic government was best suited for securing individual rights, maintaining a stable government, and making possible a peaceful state of society. The strong government of the Cæsars made every citizen's life measurably safe wherever he might find himself within the vast sweep of its territory. Thus when Paul in his journeys in extending Christianity was attacked by "false brethren," or by Gentiles of the "baser sort," he had only to declare himself a Roman citizen to

secure immediate protection. War was no longer a menace that weighed on the people's spirits, since a foreign war anywhere on the soil of Rome's far-reaching territory could hardly be thought of. Only civil war could be feared and the Roman army was so powerful that this was thought by the people to be almost impossible. The public mind was not, therefore, enthralled with fear.

2. That there might be easy communication between the city of Rome and her numerous provinces, a great system of highways was constructed, leading from each province or district directly to Rome, and along these highways inns, taverns, and other places of entertainment were prepared, so that travelers could easily find places for rest and refreshment. Thus was made possible at the opening of the first century safe and reasonably comfortable travel throughout the Roman world. These facilities, combined with certain peculiar social conditions of the day, begat a desire for wider knowledge and gave a general impulse to travel. Officials and government messengers passed busily back and forth between Rome and her various provinces, and from province to province. Centurions and soldiers were also regularly circulating along these highways, while numerous embassies to Rome from the cities in various parts of the Empire, or from Rome to the

governors of the distant provinces, pressed their way along these great national arteries of trade and travel.

3. Many were traveling for purposes of health, education, or purely for pleasure. Large numbers of patients from great distances visited curative springs and the famous medical institutions connected with religious centers, and students flocked by the thousands to the celebrated schools at Athens, Alexandria, and Rome. Then there was a large floating element in search of employment pouring its streams along these roadways into the great cities, particularly into Rome. There was therefore not only a ceaseless multitude circulating over the Empire, but also a great variety of people from all walks of life. Hence men of all shades of thought intermingled, and new ideas easily passed from mind to mind. These physical conditions and this general habit of travel made possible that gathering in Jerusalem from all parts of the Roman Empire on the Day of Pentecost; they were also necessary conditions for the rapid spread of Christianity over the Roman world.

4. Another fact worthy of mention in this providential preparation for the introduction of Christianity was the universality of the Greek language as a means of both oral and written communication. As already noted, Rome was made up of peoples from many races

and tongues and the Greek had become one of the two languages in universal use. Most, if not all, of the books of the New Testament were written in the Greek, and this highly developed language, with its superior facility in expressing delicate shades of thought and thus conveying to the mind spiritual ideas, seems to have been providentially ordained as the most effective means of transmitting to the world this highest revelation of truth.

5. Greek philosophy and literature, marred as they were in some of their conceptions of the universe and of human life, rendered a notable service in preparing the human mind to think in the larger terms of the Christian religion. The increased stimulus given to travel and intercourse under the Roman sway made the people generally acquainted with the rich treasures of Greek learning; this immensely enriched the minds of the people, and also created a bond of intellectual and moral sympathy. The literary and artistic genius of the Greeks became generally recognized, and their achievements in philosophy, literature, science, and art were esteemed and appropriated by the many nationalities that commingled in the Roman Empire. Thus the intellectual range was immensely extended, the spirit of inquiry was greatly quickened, and the mind

was made more hospitable to new adventures into the wide realms of thought.

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION

1. It was the Jewish race that made the most pronounced, the most vital, contribution toward preparing the world for the coming of the Christian religion. We have already referred to the service the Jews rendered the world in giving it their exalted monotheism. From the days of Abraham they had held before men a unique conception of the oneness and spirituality of God. "The Lord our God is one Lord," they declared, and in his nature is "high and lifted up" far above all that is material. The great prophets, whose minds came in such a remarkable degree under the illumination of the Divine Spirit, filled this idea with its larger meaning and proclaimed him the God of perfect righteousness and the ruler of the world. These prophets also insisted that he was approachable, that he was reasonable, that he cared for mankind. They represented him as crying to his erring people, "Come now and let us reason together." Loyalty to him, therefore, upon the part of his people, and devotion to his great ethical principles, must eventuate somehow in victory over their enemies and in their general well-being. It was this idea deeply embedded

in their minds that turned Pharisaic teachers with such eager hearts to the search for the path of righteousness, notwithstanding their fatal mistake in adopting the way of casuistry and ritual. In their blindness they were "feeling after God, if haply they might find him."

2. The literature of the Jewish people had a far-reaching influence in preparing the soil of the first Christian century for the planting of the truths of the gospel of Christ. This literature was a slow growth through many generations and, springing out of the throes of profound personal and national experiences, it dealt with the fundamental questions of human life. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." With the consciousness that the hand of the Lord was upon them, these men, with poetic insight and prophetic passion, dared to speak for God and thus make known his mind and the great ethical principles by which he was governing the world. This literature made its appearance in the form of history, of homily, of poetry, of prophecy. With its charming imagery, its deep tone of sincerity, and its clear note of authority, it everywhere challenged the mind to a deeper study of the great questions of religion.

3. With the Jewish people there was a growing feeling that the fullness of time had come for the God of their fathers to make bare his arm and fulfill his

promise of a glorious victory for his chosen people. Hence there was at the opening of the first century a widespread expectation that "the wrath to come," which was to be poured out on their oppressors as the initial step in founding the kingdom of the Messiah, was about to be turned loose. Moved by a strong impulse to equip themselves for this great event, there were those, like the Essenes, who, yielding to a tendency toward the ascetic life, retired from general contact with society and gave themselves to the most rigorous self-denial and the most persistent self-discipline. Others, like Simeon and Anna, led lives of quiet devotion in the ordinary walks of life, animated with a growing conviction that God was about to send the long-looked-for Deliverer who would lead his people out of their humiliation "into a large place," where there would be nothing to hurt or make afraid. There were, no doubt, many spiritually-minded households in which this expectation was growing daily more poignant and concerning which they thoughtfully conversed as they gathered about their hearthstone. It was through such means as this, we may believe, that the Holy Spirit prepared Elizabeth and Mary for their holy functions.

This Messianic conception awoke far back in Jewish history with something of the vagueness of a dream,

but as misfortunes continued and their minds opened to the Spirit it took on more definite form and diffused itself through all their religious thinking. At the opening of the first Christian century it had spread among the masses of the people until the Sadducees alone refused to share in this hope. The people at large were waiting for their Deliverer and eagerly expectant concerning his appearance.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

In an atmosphere thus charged with Messianic expectancy, and in one of the deeply pious homes in the tribe of Judah, there was born a child, at the very beginning of our era, who was to become the forerunner of the Messiah in the more immediate preparation of the public mind for the ministry of Jesus. John's father was a priest and his mother was one of those beautiful souls that had been nourished and refined by religion and had become inspired by prolonged dwelling on the Messianic hope. This child, known in manhood as John the Baptist, a child of promise, a gift of God to these devout parents, was to be so trained and so empowered that he could "make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." Through all of his childhood and youth he must have been kept face to face with the fact that he was sent

of God to do a specific work in preparing the way for the promised Messiah. We can easily imagine the effect that such a religious atmosphere—such an unusual conception of the significance of one's life and such exciting expectations—would have on the mind of a highly sensitive child and youth. It seems that quite early in his manhood John became an extreme ascetic, retiring into the wilderness and there meditating amid the silences of nature on the hopes of his people and on the strange implications of his high calling. The first view history gives us of him after the story of his birth is his sudden emergence from his long retirement with his startling message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Of course the substance of such a message would at once attract wide attention; and adding the deep earnestness of the speaker and the authority with which he spoke, we can understand why multitudes were drawn from all classes of society to hear this prophet of the desert. His emphasis on personal repentance and on the immediacy of the new kingdom made his preaching immensely effective and this in a large way contributed to the preparation of the public mind for the richer and more vital message of the One who came after him.

THE BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF JESUS

1. About six months after the birth of John the Baptist Jesus was born in the little town of Bethlehem of Judea. Thither Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Joseph, to whom she was espoused, had gone from their home in Nazareth to be enrolled under a special order from Cæsar Augustus. "In the political condition of the Roman Empire, of which Judea then formed part, a single whisper of the Emperor was sufficiently powerful to secure the execution of his mandates in the remotest corner of the civilized world." Hence, the explanation of the appearance of Joseph and Mary at the time and place appointed at such a critical period in Mary's life. In the New Testament record we are told that Mary was betrothed to Joseph as his wife and, as we have already seen, it was not unusual for the couple to have no further ceremony after that of the betrothal, and their living together was regarded by society as good form.

2. Joseph and Mary had their modest betrothal ceremony in keeping with the simple custom of the humble class to which they belonged. Luke, no doubt the most careful historian who has made a contribution to our early records concerning Jesus, relates a most beautiful story, as striking in its reserve as in

what it discloses, of a divine interposition resulting in the virgin birth of Jesus; and while it is possible to conceive that God might have chosen some other way of sending the Messiah into the world, still from the standpoint of history there is no reasonable ground for discrediting this New Testament account. Luke informs us that he went back to the sources and "traced the course of all things accurately from the first." It must, therefore, have been currently reported among the "eye witnesses" of Jesus, whom Luke seems carefully to have consulted.

3. The multitudes that came up for this enrollment from distant quarters because of ancestral connection with this historic village, soon crowded its little inns and public houses until all sheltering retreats were sought and gladly utilized by travelers weary with their long journeys. Joseph and Mary, along with many other belated travelers, took refuge for the night in one of the numerous caves which abound in the limestone hills about Bethlehem, places which were ordinarily used to shelter and protect domestic animals. Here Jesus was born.

Although we have little more than occasional references to Joseph and Mary by the New Testament writers, enough is revealed to enable us to form a pretty definite idea of their character and inner life.

They were both intensely devout and were no doubt deeply imbued with the current Messianic hopes of their race. They evidently were deeply thoughtful and were anxiously concerned about their nation and the fate the future had in store for their distressed people. With such profound natures and with such a thoughtful attitude toward life, their home life would naturally be well ordered and pervaded with the spirit of religion. In such a home moral and religious training would have first consideration and would be of a high order. There is certain to have been some connection between such careful home-training and the fact that, at the age of twelve, Jesus's questions and replies to the doctors of the law were so replete with wisdom "that all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." And the rapid development after he returned with his parents to his Nazareth home that led Luke to make the suggestive remark, "He grew in wisdom," was the result of the most intelligent instruction and training. With our knowledge of Jewish educational methods we cannot doubt that in his early childhood Jesus was made thoroughly familiar with the Jewish ritual, and with the simpler parts of many of their holy books. With the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, and others of the prophets, he must have become conver-

sant early in his life, as his knowledge of them is shown to have been extensive and profound. It is also thought that he was acquainted with the uncanonical Jewish books. He could use both the Aramaic and Greek languages, and there is reason for believing that he also knew Hebrew.

4. Whatever educational advantages were available in the little town of Nazareth, we may be sure that these anxious and intelligent parents utilized them in the training and development of this earnest-minded boy. They must eagerly have watched for every opportunity the synagogue or the village school offered for developing his mind and giving him a fuller understanding of the religion of their fathers. But above all that was done for his development and instruction by his home and community were his own ceaseless efforts to grow in mind and expand in soul. This was made manifest in his visit to the classroom of the teachers of the law in the temple at the age of twelve. How he studied nature and through her laws came to such a satisfying understanding of God and the great moral order of the world is revealed in that wonderful treasure of wisdom he has left us in the parables of our Gospels.

5. It seems likely that at an early period in his youth he began to work with Joseph at the carpenter's

trade. As there were two sisters and several brothers younger than himself in the home, such a large family must have made his labor necessary as an aid to Joseph in supporting them. Then, as his mother appears in the record of the Gospels as a widow a little later in his life, it is likely that Joseph's death may have thrown the burden of family support on Jesus at an early period.

6. It is evident that he knew the life of his people. Their habits of thought, the significance of all of their parties and sects, their petty religious views and practices and the high hopes that nourished a noble remnant, were all open to his penetrating vision. The Messianic thought that was engaging the mind of the people at large, and was burning like a flame in some of the finer souls, must have profoundly interested and influenced Jesus. The report of the work of John the Baptist, who had suddenly come from his long desert retirement and was now attracting multitudes from all classes of society with his burning message about the new kingdom that was at hand, drew Jesus from his daily task to the banks of the Jordan that he might hear this strange prophet. John's message was very simple and quite limited in its range of thought, but it came with such moral earnestness that it smote deeply men's consciences and made keen and

commanding their Messianic expectations. When Jesus presented himself for baptism, John's spiritual vision, sharpened by these years of self-discipline and communion with God, discovered in Jesus one not only superior to himself in character and spiritual endowment, but also the One prepared and sent to meet the Messianic longing of his sinning and afflicted people. Through the prophetic words of John concerning him may we not believe a fuller consciousness of his peculiar relationship to God and of his Messianic mission was immediately awakened in Jesus? We can thus understand his being seized with an impelling desire to retire into some quiet place where, alone with his Father, he could think through the significance of his mission.

7. This forty days' retirement was an experience of intense struggle through a period of prolonged and terrible temptation. It was no doubt this experience especially that led one of the New Testament writers to say of him, "He suffered, being tempted." In this period of profound and prolonged concentration of thought on his life's work we may believe that he saw in outline all that was involved in his Messianic mission—even the cross itself. He, therefore, came out of this season of deep, anxious meditation with such a sense of moral and spiritual victory, with such a

consciousness of his own capabilities, and with such an intimate knowledge of the mind of the Father that he was ready to commit himself irrevocably to his superhuman task.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was the birth of Christianity such a momentous event?
2. Why had it not earlier made its appearance?
3. What preparation do you think was necessary to the effective spreading of the Christian religion?
4. What part could government play in this preparation?
5. What effect does culture have in preparing a people for a higher conception of God and of human life?
6. How did the revival of learning after Alexander's conquest affect the religious attitude of the people generally?
7. What contribution did John the Baptist make to the religious life of his people?
8. Did the parents of Jesus have any part in the making of his character?
9. What effect did the Jewish Church have on his life?

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CHAPTER VI

JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

IT was in an atmosphere vibrant with expectancy that Jesus began his public ministry. While all were looking for their great deliverer, their ideas were quite indefinite both as to his nature and his character. Of this much they seemed quite sure, that he was to have kingly qualities and prerogatives, and was to be God's chosen agent in establishing the new kingdom. In such terms as "King," "Anointed," "Son of David," the idea conveyed was that of a leader chosen and fitted by God for bringing in the new order. It seems doubtful whether, in the minds of either the scribes or the common people, there was any question as to the nature of this expected deliverer. That their long-looked-for rescue and triumph were near, and that the divinely commissioned one who was to effect this deliverance was about to make his appearance, were considerations altogether sufficient for their practical habit of thought.

JESUS THE CARPENTER

Jesus was about thirty years of age when his public career of teaching and preaching began. Up to this

time he had lived so simply and humbly that he was hardly known outside of his own community; and in the village of Nazareth, where he had been from his childhood, he had not, as far as we are informed, undertaken any sort of leadership. He was known simply as a quiet toiler, albeit a man of unusual probity of life and marked elevation of thought. His superior knowledge of the Scriptures may have sometimes led to his being invited to read the lesson in the synagogue service; but the question asked when he made his public appearance—"Is not this the carpenter?"—seems fully to reveal his standing in his community up to this time.

BEGINNING HIS MINISTRY

With beautiful simplicity and penetrating insight Jesus began his ministry. John the Baptist, upon whose sensitive soul had been flashed the impression that Jesus was the Messiah, introduced him to his disciples as the One who was to come, and this at once gave Jesus the sympathetic hearing of this deeply religious group. It was from this company that he won his first followers, which doubtless led him to spend the first months of his ministry in Judea. Here he called the people to repentance and did his work, in this incipient stage, very much after the order of

his great forerunner. A little later he withdrew from such close proximity to John and, accompanied by his disciples, went into Galilee; and there, after the imprisonment of John, he threw himself with great vigor into the work of healing the sick and otherwise ministering to physical needs, and also in carrying on a persistent campaign of evangelism. In the meantime he seemed to regard the religious education and spiritual development of his chosen disciples as his major task.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN JOHN AND JESUS

In the most simple and artless way Jesus began his work. Without any reference to any sort of doctrinal system and without even the suggestion of a desire for an organization, he simply took up John's message as his starting point and, insisting that the kingdom of God was at hand, began to unfold its nature. But there was a marked contrast between John and Jesus. John was a rough man of the desert, a rigidly self-disciplined, uncultured ascetic, with the ascetic's meager outlook on life and with but little more than a negative conception of the significance of the new kingdom for whose coming he was looking. He saw that the old order of life must be abandoned. Men must turn from their unrighteous ways. "The ax was

laid at the root of the tree" ready to destroy the old order of life. But he could not envisage the high character of the new kingdom. He most vigorously condemned sin and urged men to repent, but of the deep significance of sin—of its enchanting power, of its terrible mastery over men, and the means of permanent recovery from it—John had no satisfying message.

How different the life and the teaching of Jesus! He lived a thoroughly normal human life, "eating and drinking" with all classes of men and thus taking his place in social life about him, notwithstanding his consciousness that he was the Messiah whose coming John had proclaimed, and that to him was committed the work of founding the kingdom of God. So far was he removed from the ascetic life of the Baptist that some of the unfriendly-minded severely criticised him because, as they said, "he eateth with publicans and sinners." Then over against John's imperfect conceptions of the new kingdom and of the life of the individual in the new order stands the radiant ideal of Jesus. His mind was so saturated with the visions of ancient prophets and psalmists, he had so delighted in the revelation of the divine mind through nature's processes and had so cultivated the great experiences that grew out of his intimate fellowship with his

Father, that he brought to his ministry a great constructive view of the new kingdom, a view laden with the wealth of his own abundant life. As he gradually outlined it, the kingdom was to be a new social order in which God was to be the Father and supreme Ruler and all men were to be brethren working together for the fulfillment of the Father's will. He saw sin deeply rooted in man's nature and blighting his whole life, that sin has to do with motives and desires and wells up out of the depths of the heart. In the new kingdom adequate means must be provided for the conquest of sin, and he shows that this can be done only by the life-giving presence and power of the Spirit of God in the heart of man. Right living and fellowship in this new kingdom were not to be secured, he insisted, by petty inhibitions, endless ceremonial cleansings, and a general outward religious routine. They must proceed from great principles divinely implanted in man's spiritual nature.

Viewed from the standpoint of the popular conception of the kingdom, the task of inaugurating and establishing it might be quite easy. With the deep-seated popular discontent with things as they were, with the burning resentment of the Jews toward those who had long held them in subjection, and with the general feverish expectations of some form of divine

interposition, all that would have been necessary for Jesus to do in order to enlist under his leadership both the Pharisees and the masses of the people would have been to make an appeal to their prejudices and organize them for action. But he saw that only by patiently giving the people the truth, by discovering to them the mind and character of God, and by revealing to them the inwardness and essentially spiritual nature of religion would it be possible to establish the kingdom of God. Since this entire program would run counter to general prejudices and preconceptions, he no doubt clearly saw that the fate of the great prophets of the past would also be his and that he was, therefore, entering upon a mission that necessarily involved vicarious suffering.

UNIQUE CHARACTER OF HIS TEACHING

Jesus did not align himself with any of the religious parties of his day and did not champion either the Pharisaic or the popular Messianic view. In the earlier part of his ministry he devoted himself to making known to his disciples the elements of character necessary to membership in the new kingdom rather than to the discussion of his Messiahship. The term "Son of Man," which he so frequently used at this period to designate himself, was taken from the book of

Daniel where it represents "a man as the type of a kingdom of saints." Instead, therefore, of invoking a discussion about his own person, Jesus preferred to make clear to them the standards and ideals of his kingdom. He could thus let his own life stand out before them as the type of those who were to make up this kingdom. Later in his ministry he made it plain and emphatic that he was the One sent of God and that to see him was to see the Father; but with profound insight into his mission he held their attention at this early stage of his ministry to the elements of character, the way of life, involved in the new kingdom. His significant call was, "Come, and learn of me." His plan was to have his disciples constantly with him, that through this intimate fellowship with him they might see the character of God and catch the spirit of the new kingdom. Men who could not at first understand his words and were unable to grasp his ideals, by this close friendship came to love him, and through this love to grasp his thought and discern his spirit.

HIS WORK IN GALILEE

It is of his ministry in Galilee that we have the fullest account in the Gospels. From the beginning he was popular with the Galileans. His interest in the

poor and the suffering, his evident superiority to other teachers with whose instruction they were familiar, "the sweet reasonableness" of his message, his gracious spirit—all of these things combined to make him irresistibly attractive to these Galileans with their greater freedom from the bondage of traditionalism and casuistry. Hence, great multitudes followed him and waited with deep interest upon his ministry. But it was the small openminded group to whom he could more effectively unfold the great truths of life that especially attracted him and drew his constant attention. His weapon was the truth. It was the truth that was to make men free; it was the truth that was to sanctify them—hence, his uppermost concern was with those who were really hungering for this bread of life.

HIS DIFFICULT TASK

With their minds so habituated to their ancient routine it was extremely difficult for the multitudes who flocked to hear Jesus to grasp this higher way of thinking and living. Even the inner circle, made up of his chosen disciples, were slow of heart in understanding him. In the first place, they were men of mature age who, up to this time, had had very limited opportunities for education and had been denied

contact with all the broader cultural influences. Minds thus neglected, and more or less impoverished up to the age of maturity, lose their flexibility and their power of insight and respond haltingly to all new truth. In addition to this, all Jewish people, with a few rare exceptions like the prophets and the poets, had the traditional habit of mind, a habit that at once resists the approach of fresh truth and thinks only in terms of the past. While this little company of disciples was no doubt made up of the best material Jesus could command, still such limitations were an inevitable part of their heritage. Hence, Jesus proceeded upon the sound pedagogical principle of beginning where the mind of the pupil is found and gradually leading out toward the larger conceptions. Without attempting at once to destroy their misconceptions, he contented himself with unfolding his ideals little by little to their slowly awakening minds. His self-restraint is revealed in the words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." As a result of their mental limitations, many things that he said to them did not yield their deeper meaning until long after they were uttered. Thus it was that the truths concerning the kingdom he came to establish, while they were so elemental and so simply expressed, had slowly to germinate and develop in the minds of these men before

they could flower into the full conception of the wonderful "way of life" which he came to reveal.

BEGINNING OF OPPOSITION

His ministry had not proceeded far until the criticisms and antagonisms of the Pharisees made it necessary for him to take sharp issue with their position, and with this system of thought and ritual he soon made a complete break. His view of God and of life was fundamentally at variance with those of Pharisaism. To his mind God was to be interpreted as a Father, rather than a Lawgiver and Ruler. Righteousness was to him a matter of motive and purpose, a condition of the inner life. To him religion was "the life of God in the soul of the individual." These views were gradually working their way into the thinking of the disciples when the Pharisees discovered in this teaching the creation of a popular movement which, if allowed to grow, would inevitably end "fasting as a religious duty, make Sabbath observance vastly less strict, abolish the distinction between clean and unclean altogether, make stricter all teaching concerning marriage and divorce, lessen the influence of the oral law, give new importance to the masses and less to the professional classes, destroy the ultra-national character of the expected kingdom—a movement which, in a

word, would undo most of the political and social development which had made them the popular leaders." As the very foundation of their world, therefore, seemed to be threatened, they threw themselves into open hostility to the new teacher and his religion. His being in Galilee at the outbreak of this hostility probably saved him from the immediate punishment they wished to inflict on him. Even at this distance from the center of Pharisaic influence they misrepresented him, hounded him, and in every possible way opposed his work. Jesus now attempted to enlarge his influence by sending out a group of chosen men to the various villages of Galilee that he would not himself be able to visit, with the hope that these men might deposit in the minds of the people at large his ideas of God and the new kingdom.

But the persistent work of the Pharisees succeeded in stirring up opposition which soon became so fierce that it seemed necessary for Jesus to abandon his work in Galilee. Taking his twelve chosen men with him he made a journey through Tyre and Sidon, thence into the Greek cities known as the Decapolis, and finally through Perea on into Judea. This persecution became the occasion of his making it clear to his chosen group that in spite of this opposition of Jewish leaders, and the radical difference of their own former

expectations concerning the Messiah to the course he was pursuing, he was nevertheless the Christ. He thus drew from them a confession of their faith in him as the Messiah, telling them, in the meantime, of the sufferings he foresaw would grow out of this opposition and insisting that their faith must be prepared to stand the fearful test. On this itinerary, memorable to these disciples, he ministered to men's physical needs, paused to bring comfort to the distressed, and taught as men gathered in great multitudes or in small groups of anxious listeners. While in his ministry he was moved by his great compassion to give help whenever it was needed, all of this gracious work served as a revelation of God and of the character of those who were to be members of the new kingdom.

FINAL VISIT TO JERUSALEM

In the spring of A.D. 29, taking with him his twelve chosen apostles, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, seemingly with the purpose of publicly declaring himself to be the Christ. As he approached Jerusalem he found himself the central figure of a great multitude from different parts of the country, all of whom were eagerly making their way to the Passover. Suddenly the entire multitude were seized with a strange enthusiasm for him and with a great

ovation united in proclaiming him the Christ who was to come. Entering the city, he made his way to the Temple, cleansed it of its defilement growing out of traffic in animals for sacrifice and rebuked those who were responsible for thus desecrating the "house of prayer." Some Bible scholars see in this incident the complete annulling by Jesus of the old Jewish sacrificial system.

2. The outburst of popular favor that greeted him as he entered the city lifted him, in the eyes of the jealous officials, out of the class of merely radical teachers and invested him with the appearance of a dangerous revolutionist. The Sadducees united with the Pharisees therefore in planning to check the movement in its incipient stage by at once arresting Jesus and in some way ridding the country of him. Still he moved openly and unafraid about the city, inspiring his disciples with faith and courage, explaining to the spiritually hungry multitude the nature of the new kingdom and rebuking the rabbis for their persistent emphasis on trivial things while they neglected the weightier matters of the law. It was at this time that he gave some of his most illuminating parables and revealed some of the great creative principles of the kingdom of God.

3. On the night following the Passover, while he

was alone with the apostles, he instituted the Lord's Supper, which was to be observed by them and his future disciples as a perpetual memorial of his death. As the hostility toward him spread and increased in intensity his sensitive soul "was sore troubled" and he withdrew with his disciples into the quiet of Gethsemane, where he was later betrayed by one of them into the hands of his enemies. In the early morning he was brought before an irregular meeting of the Sanhedrin, and was hastily tried and condemned. He was then hurried before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the province of Judea, for his approval of their sentence, and was there charged with being a dangerous revolutionist: "We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king." After much hesitation Pilate was led to confirm the judgment already passed by their irregular court and Jesus was turned over to the officers to be crucified. The sentence was carried into effect with dispatch, and before nightfall his body was in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

In the face of the cruel treatment of the mob that arrested him and of the jibes and insults hurled at him during the trial and while he was on the cross, Jesus's bearing was so self-restrained, so lofty, so

super-human that a most profound impression was made, as voiced by the Roman officer in charge of the execution: "Truly this was the Son of God."

During his brief ministry Jesus had made an impression on his immediate followers that lifted him above all human teachers and leaders. Through his personality he had won a love and loyalty equaled by no other in human history. He had given men conceptions of God, ideals of character, and a radiant view of life that transformed them and bound them to him as leader and Saviour.

But now that his friends had seen him die on the cross and his body placed in the tomb, they were so confused, so overwhelmed that they scattered aimlessly about, disorganized, disheartened, and hopeless as to the future of their movement. But on Sunday following the Friday of his crucifixion something took place in the experience of his disciples that completely changed their mood, that drew them into a closer fellowship, and made them invincible witnesses to the fact that Jesus was the Christ. They declared that he had appeared to some of them alive and had talked with them. These experiences were repeated again and again until not only all of the apostles had seen him, but many others, including "more than five hundred brethren at once."

The change that so quickly took place in the lives of these distraught disciples, thus re-making them into one of the most determined and confident groups that ever championed a great cause, has no other adequate explanation than this experience of contact with their risen Lord. In the light of his resurrection, many of his sayings that they had been unable to understand now became luminous to their minds; and that he was the Son of God, the Christ who was to deliver them and bring in the kingdom, they never afterward for a moment doubted.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the leading characteristics of the Messianic expectations of the people when Jesus made his appearance?
2. In what respect, up to the time of his public appearance, did the daily life of Jesus differ from that of other men?
3. What was the significance of the forty days' temptation?
4. How did the teaching of Jesus differ from that of John the Baptist?
5. How did it differ from the teaching of the Pharisees?
6. What is the difference between a religion of rules and a religion of principles?
7. Was Jesus expecting a sudden transformation of the world, or a slow process of development?
8. Why may we believe that the apostles chosen by Jesus to carry on his work were the best type of men within his reach?

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VII

BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND FALL OF THE JEWISH STATE

It was a small remnant of the people of Judea that accepted Jesus as Saviour. Judaism, therefore, as a religion and a system of thought was little influenced by the Christian community. The materialistic Messianic views of the Pharisees and their sensational fanaticism made a more effective appeal to Judaism's peculiar bent of mind and hastened it toward its tragic end. More and more Judaism conformed to the ideas and the spirit of Pharisaism. On every hand ambitious fanatics were arising and attempting to establish themselves in positions of power by an appeal to this Messianic hope. Pilate's downfall was brought about by the appearance in Samaria of a self-styled prophet who was going to make known the hiding place of the sacred vessels that Moses was supposed to have hidden on Mount Gerizim. When multitudes of the Samaritans assembled in response to his call, Pilate, through fear of an uprising, fell upon them, killing some and placing many in prison. Then when the Samaritans

complained to the authorities at Rome, Pilate was at once recalled and Marcellus was made procurator in his stead.

ATTEMPTING TO PLACATE THE JEWS

1. These Roman rulers of Palestine, discovering the inflammable condition of mind produced by this growing Messianic expectancy, did all in their power to avoid antagonizing the Jews and used their utmost endeavor to placate them. It was this hope of pleasing the Pharisaical element that led Caligula to appoint Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, as king over what was formerly the tetrarchy of Philip and the little tetrarchy of Lysanias. Agrippa was a man of unusual ability as a ruler and his history reads like a bit of romance. Because of his ability, and also through sharp political maneuvering, he was finally appointed king over all the territory over which Herod the Great had ruled. This reestablishment of the kingdom of Judea, with an Asmonean Herod as king, awakened anew the hopes of the Pharisees and imparted new life to Judaism. Herod was studiously respectful of the Jews' religious sentiments and convictions. He made Jerusalem his home, carefully observed all Jewish ceremonies, protected the sanctity of their synagogues, and forbade the stamping of por-

traits on the coinage used in the city. He also appointed a high priest whom he knew to be acceptable to the Jews, and himself went to the temple and took part in the service. Thinking that he might further please the Pharisaic class, he attacked the struggling little Christian community, putting James the apostle to death and throwing Peter into prison.

2. Along with these concessions to the religious prejudices and convictions of the Jews, the pagan side of Herod's nature asserted itself, and at the dedicating of a great amphitheater which he had built, he attempted to entertain the people by having fourteen hundred criminals slay each other. It was possibly at one of these brutal exhibitions that he was suddenly and fatally stricken just after his admirers had paid him divine honor. His reign was a rather peaceful period in this later history of Judaism. His professed regard for the welfare of the nation and his intimate knowledge of their peculiarities enabled him to restrain, to a degree, the fanaticism of the Jews and to promote a more normal and peaceful social order.

CRUELTY OF PROCURATORS

1. After the death of Agrippa the Romans ruled Judea through a line of procurators who, in character and administration, were worthy representatives of the

wicked Nero. The procurator was given all the powers of an ordinary governor, having command of a body of troops and possessing complete administrative and financial authority. His residence was at Cæsarea, but on the occasion of feasts and other important functions that drew the multitudes to Jerusalem, he occupied Herod's palace in that city, and every resident and visitor felt the pressure of his iron hand. Throughout the administration of these procurators the Jews had no voice in their own government—self-government perished—but that spirit of freedom that characterized the Jewish people still lived. Increasingly provoked by this high-handed disregard of their rights, this spirit began to manifest itself by breaking forth in numerous protests and revolts. The Roman officers in crucifying and otherwise putting to death the leaders in these uprisings only deepened the people's hatred of Rome and intensified their religious fanaticism. Zealots and impostors continued to make their appearance with all sorts of claims to miraculous power. One of these leaders proposed to divide the waters of the Jordan and conduct his followers into a freer and more desirable life. We are told of a certain Egyptian who claimed to be the Messiah and, gathering a crowd on the Mount of Olives, promised that he would make

the walls of Jerusalem fall. There were also bands of revolutionists, possibly made up of the lower classes, who marched through the country pillaging and destroying. Incipient anarchy was everywhere springing up; the whole country was full of unrest, priest wrangling with priest, Jew quarreling with Jew, so that on every hand were signs of rebellion and a general state of chaos. This is the period of the reign of Felix and his successor, Festus, about whom special historic interest gathers because of their relation to the apostle Paul.

2. The feeling against the Romans grew daily deeper with the Zealots and their sympathizers, as Roman restrictions tightened about them. It is claimed that the procurator Florus tried to provoke them into open rebellion, and thus no doubt hastened their final uprising. But the ultimate destruction of Judea was directly due to the extreme Messianic party, and to the men among the poorer classes whom they led. This was the complete fulfillment of the destiny Jesus said awaited them if they persisted in their obdurate unteachableness and in their materialistic conceptions of the Messiah's reign. They were determined on establishing the kingdom of God by force and they perished in their own folly.

FINAL BREAK WITH ROME

The final break with Rome came when the priests refused longer to offer sacrifices to the Emperor, and turned on the Roman garrison and slew them. When the well-to-do and official classes among the Jews saw that they were facing war with Rome, they determined to organize the entire state on a revolutionary basis and this placed the Pharisaic party in immediate leadership. The whole movement was a political experiment, staged by those who had intense Messianic hopes. While the people of Jerusalem at large carried on the revolt, the Sanhedrin was without question the controlling body. Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, figured rather prominently in this revolution, as he had been appointed over Galilee by the Roman ruler. However, with his utter inexperience, he did little more than bustle about the country and subject himself to numberless dangers. Vespasian finally marched into Galilee, and, after conquering a number of her cities and fighting a battle upon the Sea of Galilee, in which many of the people were captured and slain, brought the whole of that little country under the power of his army. Then he marched into Samaria and on Mount Gerizim brutally slaughtered the Samaritans. Thus almost the entire country north of Judea

was subdued, but the bands of Zealots escaped to the city of Jerusalem, already overcrowded with refugees and fanatics.

CIVIL STRIFE

At this point there is a sudden turn in this turbulent stream of history. Vespasian had entered with great vigor upon the second year's campaign, but before he had time to do more than subjugate some of the border cities of Judea, Nero died and all hostilities of the great Empire temporarily halted. The Jews in Jerusalem, thus relieved for the time of all danger from the Romans, began to wrangle among themselves. The moderates, led by prominent priests and rabbis on the one side, and the fanatical Zealots on the other, entered into a strenuous encounter. In the first contest the moderates were successful, completely shutting up for a time the opposing force within the temple; and had it not been for the reverential regard they had for the temple, they might easily have destroyed them at once. Finally these Zealots engaged a company of Idumeans to come to their assistance and, presenting themselves at the gate of the city in the midst of a great storm, these Idumeans prevailed on the moderates to allow them to enter, and there at once began a reign of terror. All of the leading moderates were

mercilessly slain. In the name of the kingdom of God the city was for days scoured by robbers and murderers, until finally the Idumean band, discovering that they had been deceived, departed from the city.

The contest had now resolved itself into a social upheaval as well as a Messianic movement and the revolt had become anti-aristocratic, the old hatred for the Sadducees and the rich bursting out in a consuming flame. After a while it developed that there were three revolutionary armies in the city, all contending for the mastery: the Galilean Zealots were occupying the Temple Mount, the Zealots from other parts of the country the inner court, and a company of wild men held practically the remainder of Jerusalem. The outer courts of the Temple were partly destroyed and the sacred timbers converted into means of war. Soon the Holy City took on the appearance of a desert.

THE SIEGE OF TITUS

This reign of terror and misery continued throughout most of the year A.D. 69, and when Titus with his mighty army appeared before the gates of the city just before the Passover in A.D. 70, he found them so absorbed with their civil struggle that they had made no sort of preparation for defense against the Roman advance. At once began the long and desper-

ate siege, lasting from April to September and characterized by unrelenting and savage fighting. As the city was filled with visitors to the Passover, the suffering and general miseries of the siege cannot be imagined. Men were crucified and cut to pieces, and streets and houses were filled with the bodies of the dead. Through all of this butchery the daily morning and evening sacrifices were offered until there was no priest left to officiate and no animal that could be offered; so on July 17 the last sacrifice was offered. Even Titus had hoped to save the sacred Temple, but a burning brand was thrown in through an open window and soon the building was in flames. In September A. D. 70, Rome's persistence and might conquered, and the historic city, so sacred to every Jew, lay in ruins at her feet. The most cruel treatment followed the conquest. Thousands who had lived through the siege were slain, or sold into slavery, while many were kept for the cruel gladiatorial games. Titus's return to Rome was celebrated with a great triumph, and the arch which was later erected in his honor still shows the importance Rome attached to this victory. Thus the Jewish state was completely wiped out, and her destruction was due solely to the materialistic ideals of the Jews concerning the kingdom of God and the

unhappy choice they made of the means by which it was to be established.

JUDAISM NOT DEAD

However, Judaism was not dead. While she was now left without country, or temple, or high priest, she still clung tenaciously to the Talmud and Messianism, and thus projected her religion with its ancient intensity and most of its peculiarities down through the generations. But the greatest achievement of Judaism was the contribution she unintentionally made to the rise of that other Messianic hope that, a generation before the fall of the Jewish state, had taken root in the hearts of a group of Galileans and later flowered into the Christian Church. While Judaism's fanatical leaders were insisting that the long-looked-for kingdom could be established only by first making war to the death on Rome, the humble band of men who had accepted Jesus as the Christ and adopted his peaceful method of changing the world-order and making it his kingdom, were at this time hurrying into all the chief cities of the Empire and creating centers of influence that were sending forth in all directions light and healing to a darkened and distressed world. When Judaism as a nation was destroyed, the Christian Church, with sublime assurance of final victory, was

gradually permeating the world with the truth and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth.

BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. The disciples who had been scattered and demoralized by the death of their Leader were drawn together in Jerusalem by their common experience with the risen Christ, and with his Great Commission echoing in their souls they began to feel their way toward some form of united endeavor. Regarding the number twelve as having special significance with reference to the integrity of the body of apostles, they proceeded to choose a suitable man to fill the place made vacant by the death of misguided Judas. After council and prayer Matthias was selected, a man who had been associated with them "all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out" among them. Then on the day of Pentecost, while they were assembled in their place of prayer, there was a special manifestation of the presence of the Spirit of God and they became possessed of an evangelistic impulse and spiritual fervor that sent them like flaming torches through the crowds gathered in Jerusalem at this Pentecostal season; and their courageous testimony, their glad tidings, and their persuasive appeal startled the multitudes and won thou-

sands to faith in Jesus as the Christ. Thus was begun the work of the Christian Church.

2. Jesus had referred to his Church while he was in the flesh with his disciples, but had given no instruction about the form of its organization. Evidently he saw that no particular kind of organization could be essential to its successful operation and hence all matters of ways and means of carrying on his work were left wholly in the hands of his followers. There was therefore no thought at this early period of a certain form of church organization invested with an air of divine authority. Indeed throughout the apostolic period there was very little organization, and such as they had was so very elementary and fluid that changes and additions were readily made as conditions and needs called for them.

3. The next step in the program of the apostles after the election of Matthias to the apostolate was the appointment of the seven men to look after their collections for the poor among them and see that the funds were wisely and justly distributed.

4. That is a most beautiful picture the Acts of the Apostles gives us of the social life of the disciples following the Pentecostal experience. They lived together in the most intimate family-like fellowship, with their religion as their bond of union and their one

absorbing interest. Their fine spirit of brotherhood, the gladness and radiant hopefulness their new religious experience gave them, and their bold testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, attracted wide interest and daily drew many fellow Jews to the acceptance of their victorious faith. But beyond the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah no effort was made upon the part of these disciples to change either the views or the customs of the Jews who thus affiliated with them. This no doubt added immensely to the force of their evangelistic appeal and made possible that peculiar "favor with all the people" that especially characterized this early period. The little Christian community at this time was really a group of Jews, who, accepting Jesus as Messiah, remained perfectly loyal to all of the traditions and rites of the Jewish faith. Christianity, as the disciples understood it at this early period, was not a substitute for Judaism, nor indeed an addition to it; it was simply the recognition of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Messianic hope. The great work of changing the existing world order and establishing in its stead the kingdom of God was still in the future, an event that was to take place after Jesus' second appearance, which they were anxiously awaiting. This Jesus whom they had seen

ascend into heaven was soon to return and triumphantly assert his Messianic power.

ALL THINGS COMMON

There developed a semi-communistic order of life among these early Christians which was possibly brought about in part by their ardent hopes of the immediate reappearance of Jesus and the inauguration of the new kingdom. This highly expectant state of mind would naturally produce an attitude of comparative indifference toward the everyday affairs of life—a condition of mind that a little later showed itself among some of Paul's disciples and elicited from him a severe rebuke. To the members of this early group of Christians life's significance now centered in intimate association and worship, and the Acts of the Apostles represent them as spending a large part of their time in joyous spiritual fellowship. As their Lord might appear at any time, they seemed to feel that their business was to keep themselves in a frame of mind to meet him, by social worship, the exchange of religious experiences, and blameless daily living. Just how long this peculiar social condition continued and what were its effects upon the disciples, the author of the Acts does not inform us. Through all of this early period they had a most vivid sense of the pres-

ence and influence of the Holy Spirit and were deeply conscious of his availability for them for special endowments and for meeting all responsible situations.

HELLENISTS AS LEADERS

Two men suddenly loom into prominence in this Jerusalem Church, Stephen and Philip. Only a little while ago they had been appointed among the seven who were to have charge of the Church's charities, and now they suddenly appear as leaders in evangelic effort and possibly also in giving to the gospel message something of its larger significance. They were both Hellenists (Grecian Jews), and it seems likely that a more liberal culture, due to their surroundings in their earlier life, had so freed them from the traditional bent of mind that they were able to grasp more readily than their brethren of Palestine the larger meaning of the Christian religion. It seems evident from the report Luke gives us of the charges made against Stephen that he had come to see that Christianity was something vitally different from Judaism, and with all the self-restraint he might impose on himself as he cautiously felt his way to the fuller expression of this new way of life, it was inevitable that the implications of his teaching would soon excite criticism and finally open opposition. Fierce persecution

soon broke out, resulting in the trial and death of Stephen and in scattering abroad the great body of disciples—"except the apostles." This, however, was so overruled as to work for the good of their cause, for these disciples, emboldened by Stephen's testimony and triumphant death, went everywhere preaching the word; and the groups of disciples that later appear scattered over Palestine indicate the extent of their work and the effectiveness of their preaching.

Barnabas, who was also a Hellenist, seems to have become a disciple early in the history of the Christian Church. Selling his material possessions, he invested his resources in the life of the Jerusalem Church and evidently became an effective leader in evangelistic work. He later became noted as the colaborer with Paul in his first great missionary journey out into the Roman Empire.

QUESTIONS

1. In what sense did the Jewish people themselves bring about the destruction of the Jewish state?
2. How did their Messianic expectations contribute to this?
3. Is not every form of religious fanaticism dangerous?
4. Where did the peculiar views of the disciples concerning the early return of Jesus have their origin?
5. What was the effect of these views on the early Church?
6. In the beginning of their ministry what special subjects did the apostles emphasize in their preaching?

7. What relation did these early disciples sustain toward the Jewish Church?

8. To what extent do you think they had grasped the higher significance of Christianity?

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SCHWEITZER, *Christianity and the Religions of the World.*

VIII

PAUL'S CONVERSION AND EARLY MINISTRY

IN the trial and death of Stephen and in the fierce persecution of the disciples that immediately followed, Saul of Tarsus appears in Luke's account as the "master mind" and the leading spirit. Saul was the son of a devout Jewish family, of the tribe of Benjamin, and saturated with the Pharisaic view and spirit. Tarsus, the capital city of the province of Cilicia and one of the great literary centers of the Roman world, was his native city. It was widely known for its unusual educational advantages and for its devotion to the pursuit of learning. An active, eager mind like that of young Saul could but be profoundly influenced by the very atmosphere of such a city, notwithstanding the fact that in his early youth he seems to have been sent to Jerusalem for his education. His pride in his native city indicates how he cherished the opportunities and influences it made available to him in his earlier years. His cosmopolitan manners, his familiarity with all the habits of good society, and his

rather intimate acquaintance with the great currents of thought throughout the Roman world indicate the cultural effect of this city life on his boyhood and early youth. In all kinds of conditions in after life and in the midst of all sorts of people he felt himself at home and was master of every situation. Although a devoted Jew, he still had the wide interests of a Roman citizen and prided himself in his citizenship in this mighty Empire. His father was a Roman citizen, and possibly a man of wealth whose influence was felt in Tarsus. The Hellenistic atmosphere, therefore, that thus surrounded Saul in his childhood had much to do in making possible in his later years his broader vision of life and his ready adaptability to the habits of thought of other minds.

SAUL A DEVOTED HEBREW

1. But in spite of all this, Saul was “a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” thoroughly imbued with the traditions and the extreme national and religious prejudices of his people. While still a youth he was sent to Jerusalem for his education and there, possibly for some years, sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the most celebrated Jewish teacher of that period. This careful rabbinic training determined his habits of thought throughout his life and reveals itself in his public appeals and in all of

his writings. His interpretation and enforcement of Old Testament scripture, as seen in his epistles, cannot be understood or properly evaluated without keeping in mind the fact that in his approach to the scriptures he habitually employed the methods of the rabbis.

Thus Saul came to his manhood thoroughly trained in the Jewish habits of thought of his day and with his whole soul committed to the Pharisaic interpretation of the Old Testament and of life. With his aggressive personality he soon became one of the most zealous and bigoted defenders of his faith. He was a man of great tenacity of purpose and of most intense nature—"the whole man was in every conviction and in every act." He was therefore both by nature and by training a pronounced leader of men. After completing his education in Jerusalem it seems that he went back to his native city of Tarsus and after some years of residence there, possibly serving as rabbi, he returned to Jerusalem sometime after the crucifixion of Jesus. To his penetrating mind it no doubt soon became evident that the implications of the teaching of Jesus, and of his more aggressive disciples like Stephen, were essentially and fundamentally antagonistic to the views and religious customs to which he had dedicated all of his powers of mind and heart. Although these disciples were showing perfect loyalty

to the Jewish religion in their regular devotion to its rites and ceremonies, to Saul's keener vision it became manifest that the necessary implications of this new teaching were altogether contrary to the views and mode of life for which Pharisaism stood. We may believe, therefore, that he quickly became critical toward these disciples and was watching for some declaration from them that would justify him in bringing charges against them. It is clear from Luke's record, and also from the confessions Paul makes in his Epistle to the Galatians of his persecution of the early Church, that he was the leader in the trial and death of Stephen and in the terrible persecutions that immediately followed. His reference to the part he played in the trial of Stephen has been taken as evidence of Saul's membership in the Sanhedrin that tried and condemned him. Paul himself declares that he gave his vote against him, and his prominence at his execution that led Luke to record the fact that "the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul" indicates his leadership.

2. That is a most graphic account he gives us himself of the furious persecutions he waged, following Stephen's death: "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and

made havoc of it." Elsewhere he is represented as "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." We may therefore safely conclude that it was Saul who started this wave of persecution and who became the leader in the merciless attack upon both the men and women who accepted the new faith; and he was doing it "in all good conscience before God." In his strict devotion to Pharisaism he felt it to be his religious duty to go to neighboring cities in his search for disciples of Jesus and to have the members of the pernicious sect put to death wherever they could be found. It was this sort of mission that was taking him to Damascus when his conversion occurred.

SAUL'S CONVERSION

1. The complete transformation in Saul's life on this journey is one of the most remarkable in the record of human experience. We may get some insight into the spiritual processes leading to this change by keeping in mind the fact that he had started upon this journey some time after the death of Stephen. This martyr's impassioned address and sublime magnanimity of spirit must have exerted a powerful influence on Paul's profoundly religious nature. Such an impressionable mind must have thought with deepening seriousness on the significance of a religion that could

produce such a testimony and create such a spirit, and this sort of a process of reflection would seem to be a psychological necessity to a change so radical and far-reaching in its effects.

2. But whatever intellectual and spiritual processes may have prepared the way, when the change finally came in his experience it was sudden, profound, completely revolutionary—old things passed away and all things became new. God spoke to him through Jesus of Nazareth and completely transformed him. After a conversion that involved a change in all of his religious thinking it was to be expected that a man of Paul's deep nature would be seized with a desire for a period of solitude in which he might think the whole matter through and properly orient himself in the new world into which he had been so suddenly born. His old philosophy, his theology, his ethics were all at variance with the new life that was now opening to him, and this general intellectual and spiritual upheaval made his soul cry out for a period of uninterrupted thinking alone with God. Hence he tells us that at once he went away into Arabia and the three following years seem to have been spent in solitude.

3. Paul came out of this period of reflection and adjustment—a period in which he intimates he was under the direct tuition of Jesus—with a new concep-

tion of God, of personal salvation, and of the human family. He saw God no longer as a tribal deity, but as the Father of all men; he realized salvation as oneness with God through the abiding presence of Jesus in the life of the individual, and he foresaw a renewed race bound together in a common experience and in a real brotherhood of mutual sacrificial service. Completely mastered by these great Christian conceptions, he dedicated all his wonderful powers to their promulgation, and with a determination and enthusiasm that no difficulties or dangers could check he began his great work of teaching and preaching. His early training, his superior education, his peculiar temperament, and his exhaustive investigation of the fundamentals of religion during his retirement in Arabia especially equipped him for interpreting to humanity at large the significance of Christianity and for becoming the leader in establishing permanently in the world the Christian Church. The Christian history of the latter half of the first century was largely determined by the teaching and work of this powerful man.

PAUL'S FIRST GREAT SERVICE

1. Paul's first signal service was in lifting Christianity out of the narrow limits of Judaic thought, by showing that it was, in the first place, the religion of

the spirit, that it had to do with the motives, the thoughts, the heart, rather than with rules and rites; and in the second place, that it was a world religion, concerned with the salvation of the human race rather than with any special family or nation. He was therefore the one man fitted at this critical period for giving an adequate interpretation of Christianity, for becoming the leader in breaking down racial prejudice, and for leading men to see that Jesus was the Saviour of the world and the founder of a kingdom whose fundamental principles were the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

2. Paul's persistent and usually patient effort to give to the apostles and early disciples his larger view of the significance of Christianity is one of the interesting phases of its early development. As it had been their high privilege to journey with Jesus while he was in the flesh and to be sent out by him as his witnesses, much tact and self-restraint were needed on Saul's part in his attempt to lead them into his more exalted conceptions of the meaning and power of this new religion. They were, however, quite docile under the influence of Paul's powerful personality, notwithstanding the extreme slowness with which they grasped his larger view and permanently adjusted themselves to it. They were persuaded to give their consent, if

not their hearty approval, to Paul's missionary campaign in behalf of the Gentiles; but neither Paul nor the apostles themselves seemed to regard the Jerusalem Church as fitted for offering the gospel to the non-Jewish world. It was mutually agreed therefore that they would preach to "the circumcision," while Paul and a few chosen assistants would go unto the Gentiles.

THE REVIVAL IN ANTIOCH

1. A great religious awakening in Antioch, through which many of the Gentiles were being converted to Christianity, offered the first occasion for the manifestation to the original disciples of Paul's peculiar power of adapting and applying the gospel to the Gentile mind. Report of the growing interest of the people of this great Gentile city in the religion of Jesus came to the Church at Jerusalem and they at once turned to Barnabas as the most capable man to direct the work in a field where many difficult questions would naturally arise. Barnabas was a Levite of the Island of Cyprus, who had accepted Jesus and identified himself with the Jerusalem Church early in its history. He was evidently a man of superior breadth of mind and of thorough consecration to his new religion; hence his selection for this difficult task. He went forth alone to this responsible field; but when he had surveyed the

situation and discovered its possibilities, he at once departed for Tarsus to seek Saul that he might have his wise counsel and efficient assistance in this situation, in which so much was involved. This decision proved to be most fortunate and far-reaching in its results. The fourteen or fifteen years of experience Paul had already had in work among the Gentiles made it possible for him at once to give sane direction in the midst of the delicate and difficult problems of this mixed community, and the long and familiar intercourse of Barnabas with the apostles and original disciples of Jesus gave him a fund of first-hand information about Jesus and his work that must have been of inestimable value at this time to Paul.

2. Here for a full year they carried on their work, preaching to multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles and building up a strong and most aggressive Church. About the close of the year they received information concerning the large number in the Jerusalem Church who were in indigent circumstances, and the Antioch Church promptly made an offering for their relief and dispatched it to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. This visit to the mother Church, with the bestowal of this large charity as its purpose, made this Church more immediately acquainted with Saul and his work and was a providential preparation for that

memorable council in which Paul won so completely the freedom of Gentile Christians from the bondage of Judaism. Upon returning to Antioch they took with them John Mark, a young disciple and a kinsman of Barnabas. According to early tradition he had been up to this time intimately associated with Peter; later he became the author of the earliest surviving life of Jesus.

THE MISSIONARY IMPULSE

1. Soon after the return of Saul and Barnabas there was a general desire upon the part of the Antioch Church to undertake a great missionary campaign to the Gentile world. We can easily infer that Saul was the moving spirit in this new impulse and that his was the master mind in the meeting that was called to take the matter under consideration. As could easily have been anticipated, Barnabas and Saul were chosen as the Church's representatives in this new enterprise, and after they had fasted and prayed they laid their hands on them and sent them forth. Saul and Barnabas agreed to take with them John Mark as their assistant.

2. As Antioch was at this time a city of great commercial importance, it is reasonable to suppose that many of the members of this Church were men of large financial resources and that they gave to Bar-

nabas and Saul not only their prayers and good wishes, but also the needed material support for such a difficult undertaking.

PAUL BECOMES LEADER

Up to this time Barnabas appears as leader, as he had come to Antioch from the mother Church and had brought in Saul as his assistant and coworker. But on this difficult and hazardous missionary enterprise Saul's more powerful personality and more ardent spirit naturally brought him to the front; and when they returned from this first journey, Paul was recognized by all, even by Barnabas himself, as the commanding spirit. Barnabas first led Saul and Mark to Cyprus, his native island home; and after "they had gone through the whole island," meeting with stout opposition and having very meager results, Saul becomes Paul, and Paul's growing interest and determination put him in command of the little company, and, following his lead, they at once struck northward into the—to them—unknown regions of Asia Minor. Paul, possibly from the beginning of this missionary enterprise, had Rome as his final objective. Recognizing the significance of the cities as sources of influence, he had his eye on these great centers; hence his sudden

assumption of leadership and the energetic movement of the little band into the larger areas of Asia Minor.

AT PERGA

Their first stop after leaving Cyprus was at Perga, an important commercial center of Pamphylia. It was here that John Mark forsook his comrades and returned to Jerusalem. The reason for his sudden change of mind is not given by Luke, but his leaving them so deeply affected Paul that it suggests a serious lack in him at this time of the high purpose and endurance a great enterprise like theirs demanded. Leaving this city after only a short stay, Paul and Barnabas made their way over the Taurus Mountains and down into Antioch of Pisidia, an important political center of the province of Galatia. It is quite likely that it was in this city that Paul's sickness, to which he later refers as "an infirmity of the flesh," overtook him and held him in this particular territory until he had preached the Gospel of Christ throughout the region of Galatia. There was in this city a large Jewish colony, whose religious life had attracted many of the more thoughtful Greeks. Going therefore soon after they entered the city to the synagogue to worship with this mixed company, it became easy for them to secure a sympathetic hearing. Hence, both the city and the

surrounding country were quickly informed of their presence and eagerly attracted by this new message. Indeed, it was the popularity of their message that awakened opposition, for very soon the more conservative Jews "contradicted the things that were spoken by Paul and blasphemed."

REVISIT THE CHURCHES

The method of work in Antioch, the bitter opposition awakened among the Jews and the loyal disciples won, may be taken as characteristic of their work in all of these Galatian cities. After preaching in all the more prominent centers of Galatia, Paul and Barnabas, with their far-seeing sense of the need of effective local organizations in order to conserve the results already achieved, turned back at Derbe and revisited the Churches recently formed that they might strengthen their newly won converts and more effectively organize them. Their purpose was to make a democratic brotherhood of each local group that could intelligently edify its members and become an active evangelistic force in the surrounding community. Certain officers were appointed in each of these Churches to direct the work of the body and to teach them more fully the way of life.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

1. Finishing this work, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, in Syria, to the Church that had sent them out, and there reported the success of their mission and the readiness of the Gentiles to receive the Gospel of Jesus. Sometime after their return the most critical and serious situation in the history of the early Church developed. Certain Judaizing Christians from Jerusalem, "false brethren" as Paul designated them, came down to Antioch and taught that Gentiles could not be saved without receiving circumcision. As these teachers were directly from the Jerusalem Church where the apostles were naturally supposed to be the best interpreters of Christianity and its relation to Judaism, their dogmatic message awakened profound concern, if not excitement. Paul's discerning mind at once discovered that the whole Christian movement was confronting a crisis. The position taken by these Judaizers involved a repudiation of the declaration formerly made by the Jerusalem Church when Peter returned from his visit to Cornelius and reported the manifestations of the Spirit in this Gentile home. It was also a sharp rebuke to Paul and Barnabas, for in effect it declared that their preaching was a misrepresentation of the teaching of Jesus and of his Church.

If this view should prevail, Paul saw that it would carry consternation and dismay to all the Gentile Churches that had recently been established. It was quickly agreed therefore by the Church at Antioch that Paul and Barnabas, and other brethren, should go up to Jerusalem and confer "with the apostles and elders" about this important matter.

It is evident that Paul was most profoundly stirred by this dispute, and that he spent much time in thought and prayer as to the wise course to pursue, for he tells us he "went up by revelation." He did not go to the settlement of this question simply as the appointee of the Church at Antioch, but felt himself commissioned and directed by God himself. When he reached Jerusalem his usual wisdom is shown in his taking the matter up at once in private conference "with those who were of repute"; and, pressing the matter with his usual breadth of vision and ardor of spirit, he really won his victory before the council was assembled. When the council finally passed judgment the victory was sweeping. Paul was not given to boasting, but in writing of his position in this crucial gathering he says: "We stood out firmly . . . and did not yield even for a moment." The vital truth of Christianity was at stake. Access to God through mere faith was about to be denied and there-

fore Paul could not stop short of throwing his whole mighty personality into the contest. His broader interpretation of Christianity prevailed and the liberty of Gentile Christians was secured.

2. Soon after the adjournment of this conference at Jerusalem another phase of the question of Christian liberty arose, the occasion of which was a visit of Peter to the Church at Antioch. There were Jews in Antioch who mingled on the most intimate social terms with Gentile Christians. Peter, attracted by the beautiful spirit of fellowship that bound together these Jews and Gentiles, overcame all of his former scruples and mingled freely with them, eating with them and recognizing no social barriers. But when "certain came from James" he withdrew and refused further social fellowship with the Gentile Christians, and Barnabas and other Jews were drawn away with him. This raised at once the question of the social relationship of Jews and Gentiles in a Christian Church or community. These Judaizers from James insisted that their old law governing their contact with Gentiles must be observed with all strictness, while Paul openly declared that such a position destroyed the liberty they had in Christ and really made the death of Christ of none effect. The point at issue was of such vital importance that Paul felt called upon to make a most

vigorous protest, and he tells us that he publicly rebuked Peter for the position he had taken. This incident reveals the fact that the brethren at Jerusalem had not yet grasped the full significance of mere trust in Christ and the gracious liberty involved in the Christian life, while to Paul's mind it was clear that loyalty to Jesus was the only condition of salvation, and the one bond of Christian fellowship.

QUESTIONS

1. What idea do you get from the New Testament of the training and instruction Paul received in his father's home?
2. How was he influenced by the city in which he was brought up?
3. What must have been the character and spirit of the education he received at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem?
4. What were his temperament and character when he came to manhood?
5. In the fierce persecutions he carried on against the early disciples are we to regard him as a sincerely religious man?
6. Why did he so quickly become a leader in the persecution of the Christians?
7. What was likely the human instrumentality in his conversion?
8. What was the significance of his retiring into Arabia just after his conversion, and what was the effect of this retirement on his views and life?
9. Why did Barnabas decide on Paul as the needed helper in the Antioch revival rather than one of the apostles?

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CHAPTER IX

PAUL THE GREAT MISSIONARY LEADER

WITH this disturbing and threatening controversy concerning Christian liberty, that struck so deeply at the very vitals of Christianity and that involved the very continuance of the work he had begun among Gentiles, settled, Paul returned to Antioch with an urgent impulse to take up once more the world-wide task to which he had committed himself. As he and Barnabas were planning their campaign a difference of view developed between them with regard to the wisdom of taking with them on such a trying adventure John Mark, who had forsaken them on their former journey, and that possibly at a time when his loyalty and assistance were most needed. As they failed to agree about this matter, Barnabas took Mark and set sail for Cyprus, while Paul, with Silas as his companion, started on his great mission. This was about the year 49 A.D.

From this time on we know little of the life and work of Barnabas. There is a tradition that, after spending some time in Cyprus, he went into Egypt; and, as Egypt early became quite an important Chris-

tian center, Barnabas may have laid there the foundation of the Christian Church and devoted the remainder of his life to its upbuilding.

In the Acts of the Apostles Paul appears as the one towering figure in Christian missions. With Silas he first went through Syria and Cilicia, no doubt revisiting the scenes of his earlier ministry that he might strengthen the Churches that were the first fruits of his missionary endeavor. He then hastened, with peculiar eagerness, into Galatia, that inviting field in which he had formerly labored under the trying restrictions of his bodily afflictions. The book of Acts gives us a very fragmentary account of Paul's work on both his first and second visits to this interesting field, but the Epistle to the Galatians supplies much desired information and suggests the eagerness of Paul to be again among these people. It is evident from the recent disturbance at Antioch that the Judaizers at this time were very zealous in their efforts to discount and modify the teachings of Paul and that they had hurried into Galatia to poison the minds of these devoted followers and friends of the apostle. There are good reasons for believing that a report of their destructive work came to Paul while he was yet at Antioch and that he at once wrote and dispatched to them the Epistle that bears their name. This Epistle is full of fire and pas-

sion, and the Apostle was no doubt deeply anxious to know what effect it had produced on these disciples for whom he had such a tender love. The letter seems to have had the desired effect, as Paul was received with the greatest cordiality and we have no intimation of any defection from the faith.

PAUL FINDS TIMOTHY

While in Galatia Paul had the good fortune to find the young man Timothy, who came to mean so much to him personally and was of such value to him in organizing his Churches and carrying on his work. Timothy so heartily accepted the gospel and revealed such fine qualities of character that Paul at once chose him as one of his more intimate helpers and in this relationship he continued through all of that future arduous round of missionary endeavor. For the most delicate and difficult tasks in the administration of the Church Paul felt that he had "no man likeminded" upon whom he could rely, and in his last days in the Roman prison it was this fine soul and loyal friend for whom he longed.

DIVINE GUIDANCE

Paul had a very profound sense of the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, not only in unusual sit-

uations, but in all the ordinary experiences in which man's moral nature is involved. While on these great missionary journeys he kept his mind open to divine impressions so that his direction and destination were determined by the Spirit's influence on his sensitive soul. Instead, therefore, of going from Galatia to Ephesus as he had originally planned, he was, for some reason, "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia." So northward, then westward he traveled, "not knowing whither he went," till he came to the city of Troas on the Ægean Sea. With all of this heathen country in such urgent need of his gospel, with his unusual sense of self-reliance and with his passion for preaching, this long journey from Pisidian Antioch to Troas without stopping to make his appeal is a most remarkable manifestation of submission to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It seems likely from the "we" passages in the Acts, beginning at this point in the narrative, that in Troas Paul met Luke, "the beloved physician," who made an appeal to Paul to carry his gospel over into Macedonia. At any rate, in a dream he heard a voice calling to him, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," and when he awoke he was sure that God was calling him to go into that field. Whatever thought Paul may have had of ultimately giving the gospel to Europe, it seems

reasonable to suppose that that far-away field had no place in his program until the Church was established throughout Western Asia. But after being so clearly led by Providence to change his plan and enter this field, he was prepared to press forward without wavering through all sorts of opposition and suffering.

IN MACEDONIA

Immediately therefore Paul "sought to go forth into Macedonia." How his discerning soul must have been impressed with the possibilities before him! Here was the charmed circle in which civilization for ages had been nourished. Just before him lay Greece and Rome, out of which had come the culture, the learning, the laws, and the armies that had controlled the world. Here were intrenched the superstitions and false religions of the ages and on every hand was to be seen the blight of their corrupt morals. What a challenge it must have presented to this hero's faith and to his unconquerable purpose! As he crossed into Macedonia he had for his companions Silas, Timothy, and Luke, and they made their way directly to the important city of Philippi. The beginning of the work of these missionaries in this proud city was most humble and unpromising.

In following his usual custom of beginning his

work in a new field with the Jewish people, where he discovered that they had no synagogue, he was led on the Sabbath day to their accustomed meeting place by the riverside outside the walls of the city, where was assembled for worship a small group of women. The author of the Acts gives us a very meager report of the results of Paul's work in Philippi, but it is evident from our New Testament Epistle addressed to this Church that it had a strong membership and that it had particularly endeared itself to the heart of the apostle. His work therefore must have been most successful. By healing a maid "possessed with a spirit of divination" Paul brought on himself the wrath of her masters when they saw that the source of their gain was gone and, dragging Paul and Silas before the magistrates, they had them condemned, severely beaten, and cast into prison. A miraculous deliverance from this imprisonment not only strengthened the faith of these daring missionaries, but also made a deep impression on the authorities and gave them a notable convert in the person of the jailer.

2. From such a beginning Paul carried forward his work in Macedonia with unabating zeal and vigor until he had planted the Church in all the leading centers of that interesting country. While Luke gives account of his work only in Philippi, Thessalonica, and

Berœa, it is evident from the first Epistle addressed to the Thessalonians that the Church was established generally throughout the province. In Thessalonica Paul met with bitter persecution from the Jews, thus making it necessary for him to hasten out of the city; but in his work in general in Macedonia the Judaizers who so sorely tormented him in Galatia seem not to have troubled him. His labors throughout the province were especially successful and the Churches he established were peculiarly dear to him.

As Paul's method of evangelizing was largely the slow hand-to-hand process of dealing with the individual, and with small groups, in a strictly personal way, he must have spent a considerable period in establishing Christianity throughout this province. But it is obvious from his Epistles that it was for him a period of joy and profound satisfaction. The evidence was overwhelming that the gospel of Jesus thoroughly satisfied the Greek mind and met all the longings and needs of the Gentile heart. It must also have greatly rejoiced him that Christianity was no longer confined to Jerusalem or to a single nation, but was now becoming a world religion.

3. Paul's work in Macedonia also gave him the opportunity of training a most efficient staff of co-workers. Four of these, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secun-

dus, and Gaius, were all native Macedonians, Timothy alone coming from outside this field. Paul was also especially successful in realizing his purpose of making the local organization in these various communities an active and effective body for the extension of the gospel into surrounding territory.

AT ATHENS

Forced by opposing Jews to leave Berœa, Paul was conducted by a company of friends into Achaia and then made his way directly to Athens. Aside from his great evangelizing purpose, Athens must have had peculiar attractions for him. Although it did not at this time have the political power and the cultural prominence of an earlier age, it still maintained its material splendor and was invested with something of the charm of its ancient glory. It profoundly interested Paul, and, from his address later we can see him walking through its streets, visiting its places of interest, and noting especially the evidences of its idolatry. Here he is in the original home of culture and worldly wisdom, and yet a city so spiritually benighted that it was said sarcastically, "It is easier to find a god in Athens than a man." Paul's great nature was profoundly stirred when he saw the city thus wholly given up to idolatry, and he must have longed for an

opportunity to show this pagan people "the sweet reasonableness" and moral beauty of the religion of Jesus. Meeting for a time with the Jews in their synagogue and reasoning with those who met him in the marketplace, what seemed to be a larger opportunity presented itself when some of the Stoics and Epicureans led him to the Areopagus and demanded that he tell them what his strange teaching meant. With marvelous skill and most refined tact he attempted to give them an insight into the fundamental things of his religion. But when he touched on the final judgment and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead they mocked and jeered and broke up the assembly. There were, however, a few teachable souls who believed the message of the apostle and became loyal disciples.

CORINTH

1. As the ungracious reception given his address at Athens was not encouraging to his eager soul, and as the general lightness and superficiality of the people did not promise favorable soil for the great serious truths of Christianity, Paul hurried on west to Corinth, one of the most important commercial centers in the entire Roman world. It was one of those rich, cosmopolitan cities which easily develop all sorts of corruption and shameless profligacy. It was a most stra-

tegic center for Paul's work, for ideas released here would easily circulate throughout the Roman world. Scorned, imprisoned, beaten with rods in the cities through which he had recently passed, he entered Corinth with his usual unshaken purpose and with his unconquerable faith in the power of his message. It was about the year 50 A.D. when he began his work in Corinth, and for a year and a half he poured out the energies of his great soul in planting here the Christian Church. His early acquaintance after reaching the city with two Jews recently come from Rome, Aquila and his wife Priscilla, had happy results for both his comfort and his work, and doubtless far-reaching effects through the information given him of real conditions in Rome and in stimulating his desire to visit the capital of the Empire. As they seem to have been Christians when Paul met them, and were doubtless therefore led into the Christian life while yet in Rome, there is here the suggestion of an active Christian community at this early period in the imperial city.

2. Corinth was in a peculiar sense a cosmopolitan city. Being a great commercial center, it had attracted people of all races and all faiths, and there was the license and the profligacy that usually characterize such a commingling of diverse human elements. It is likely

that Paul had never faced such extreme wickedness. He seemed to feel at once that his message was here to meet its severest test. We are warranted in inferring from his first Corinthian Epistle that he pondered most earnestly the question of the most effective approach to a community so steeped in vice, so mastered by the material. Finally he determined to attack at once their gross carnality and set over against it in sharp contrast the life of the Spirit. The crucified Jesus was his theme. There must be brought about the death of the carnal nature and a resurrection into the life of the Spirit, and this could be done only through the divine Christ. There were no other means available or conceivable for lifting them out of their moral corruption into the life of the Spirit. But in this gospel was the complete dynamic for righting all wrongs and for making perfect adjustments in all of life's relationships. When the soul was joined in intelligent loyalty to the Lord, all moral and spiritual problems would be solved in harmony with the will of God.

3. Paul's work in Corinth was abundantly successful, and he built up a most flourishing Church. While the majority of his converts were no doubt drawn from the humbler classes, yet there were some from the more highly favored social element and some who were pos-

sessed of wealth. But the peculiar credential of Paul's religion was in its power to lift a great company of men out of the vices of the submerged classes and transform them into a serious-minded, decent body of people, whose controlling desire was to know and do the will of God.

IN EPHESUS

1. From Corinth Paul took Aquila and Priscilla and hastened to Ephesus, which was one of the great centers toward which he had been looking from the time he started on this journey. But for some reason he suddenly determined to make a hurried trip to Syria; so leaving Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus, he sailed to Cæsarea and thence to Antioch. After a short stay at this great missionary center, from which he was originally sent forth, he started back to his field of operation, visiting on his way the Churches he had already established in Galatia. After revisiting the scenes of his earlier ministry and strengthening the brethren with the reports of the marvelous results attending his labors, he made his way back to Ephesus, the great Capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was in the midst of one of the largest, richest, and most thickly settled of the Roman provinces, and great highways ran out in every direction to other important

provinces and cities. In many respects it was the most important center in which Paul had yet worked. More than a century before his visit special religious privileges had been granted the Jews of the city by the Romans, permitting their religious rites, giving them the privileges of their Sabbath, and protecting them in their special pilgrimages to Jerusalem; and all of these privileges had been continued down to this time. It is not surprising therefore that Paul found at Ephesus a strong, prosperous Jewish community. This city was noted for its devotion to magic and the various quackeries that had come down from the ancient religions; and, as we might expect, there were many Jews who for purely mercenary reasons carried on these magical arts. Here all the religions of the world were found, and so long as their votaries did not interfere with vested material interests, every man was free to teach whatever religion he pleased, and he was sure to have interested hearers.

2. Paul's ability to adapt himself to unusual conditions again manifests itself. It was the custom here with all classes to begin work with the rising of the sun and to finish the day's work at eleven o'clock in the morning. Paul engaged the hall of one of the public rhetoricians or philosophers, and devoting himself to his trade as a tentmaker during the working hours of

the people, he spent the afternoons unfolding his gospel to groups of listeners. In this atmosphere, so hospitable to all cults and forms of thought, Paul must have been able to give his message to a vast number of people.

3. The first notable opposition to his work, according to Luke's account, came from a band of organized workmen. There was a votive image used in their worship. It was left within the sacred precincts of her temple as an offering to the goddess Diana. Many of these were made of gold and constituted a profitable line of work for a large number of men. When these men saw Paul's growing popularity, it occurred to them that his form of religion would turn people away from the goddess and thus cause them to lose their trade. They were at once transformed into a mob and threw the whole city into an uproar. The town clerk, discovering the trouble, nobly defended Paul and scattered the mob before they had a chance to do him bodily harm. From some declarations in his epistles we are to infer that Luke by no means mentions all of the troubles and hindrances Paul had while he was in Ephesus. Paul says himself he fought with beasts at Ephesus, and it is thought by some Bible students that this is to be taken literally—that he was actually thrown into the amphitheater and, for the amusement of the

crowd, forced to defend himself against the attack of enraged wild beasts. If this is not literally true, then he must have been in the hands of an infuriated mob that was equally as merciless as would have been the wild beasts. There is no doubt that he met with the bitterest opposition and the most merciless persecution, at least near the close of his campaign in Ephesus.

The thoroughness of his work in this great city and the permanence of the results may be seen in the fact that in succeeding centuries this was one of the greatest strongholds of Christianity.

PAUL'S EFFORT TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

1. Paul now determined to hasten back to Jerusalem. We may discover two reasons in his mind for this resolute purpose. The first was the fulfillment of the promise formerly made to the Church at Jerusalem to remember the many dependent members of their body. It seems that he had a large offering which he had secured for this purpose and he considered it wise to deliver this fund himself into the hands of the Jerusalem officials, as this would be a material expression of his interest and loyalty toward the mother Church. He had a great desire to establish and make permanent the oneness of the Church which was to him "the body of

Christ." It was, therefore, as the first great champion of Christian unity that Paul made this difficult and dangerous journey to Jerusalem. The other consideration that prompted this determination was the fact that the great Day of Pentecost was approaching and his heart was set on being there on that important occasion. It was the harvest feast and it brought to the sacred city a multitude of Jews from all parts of the world. This would therefore give him the opportunity of demonstrating to these foreign Jews the unity of Christ's followers and his standing with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. With these important objectives beckoning him, the threats of enemies and the entreaties of friends were powerless in turning him from his purpose.

2. While the leaders at Jerusalem received Paul with a show of friendliness, it was evident that there were suspicions concerning his attitude toward the Jewish law. With hope of removing these suspicions, Paul acceded to the advice of the apostles and associated himself with four men who had taken a vow, and agreed to pay their expense in the sacrifice demanded. This in the end proved most unfortunate. A company of Jews from Asia, who had doubtless antagonized his work in one of the great eastern centers, stirred up the multitude and attempted to take the law in their own

hands and kill him. His declaration that he was a Roman citizen secured him immediate protection, but he was bound and held as a prisoner by Roman authorities.

3. This was the beginning of a long period of imprisonment. As certain of the Jews were planning to seize him and slay him, the Roman officers determined to send him to Cæsarea for protection until his case could be regularly heard by the proper authorities. In due course of time he appeared before Felix, the governor of the province, who heard the accusations made against him and then gave Paul full opportunity to answer the charges and vindicate himself. Paul's answer was direct and comprehensive and was a notable exhibition of masterful oratory. Wishing to avoid antagonizing the Jews, Felix deferred his decision, and at the end of two years, when he was removed from office, Paul's case was still pending, and he was "in bonds" as a prisoner. Festus, who succeeded Felix, was immediately importuned by "the chief priests and principal men" to have Paul brought to Jerusalem for trial, hoping to apprehend him on the way and put him to death. Festus denied their request; but later, when he called Paul before him in Cæsarea and discovered that the charges had to do with Jewish rites and customs, concerning which he had very little knowledge,

he expressed a desire to have the case taken to Jerusalem for trial. But knowing the danger of falling into the hands of hostile Jews and at the same time failing to be inspired with confidence in Festus, Paul appealed to Cæsar for the final disposition of his case.

BEFORE AGRIPPA

While Paul was waiting to be dispatched to Rome for his trial an episode occurred that reveals the significance attached to him as a prisoner. While King Agrippa II was making a visit to Festus, the latter informed him of his notable prisoner and of his perplexity of mind with regard to his case, and King Agrippa immediately expressed a desire to hear him. While nothing of value developed in this hearing, either to Paul's cause or to Felix's report to the court of Cæsar, it gave to Paul an opportunity for a memorable defense of the Christian religion.

Luke gives us a classical story of Paul's voyage to Rome, with a detailed account of the furious storm and the accompanying shipwreck. He quickly won the esteem of the Roman officers in charge of him and in the midst of the storm his calmness of spirit and his commanding personality made him easily master of the panic-stricken crew.

A PRISONER AT ROME

1. Word having been received by the Christian community in Rome of Paul's coming, they determined to send a delegation to meet him and, after his long imprisonment and trying voyage, it deeply moved his heart when, forty or fifty miles out of the city, these Christians so cordially and sympathetically greeted him.

2. While here awaiting his trial he was allowed to live in his own hired house, a privilege possibly secured him through the friendly centurion who guarded him on his voyage. Friends and visitors had free access to him, and thus for two years in this prison home he preached and taught the gospel. Soon after his arrival in Rome he called together leading Jews from the city and stated fully his case to them, evidently with the hope of securing their confidence and their sympathetic support. The majority of them listened with cold reserve, but expressed a desire to hear him again concerning his religious views. On a day appointed a great company of them came together, and Paul, with his usual passion for his own people, attempted to persuade them that Jesus was the Messiah of the prophets. While some accepted his teaching, the larger number stubbornly rejected it. During the two years of his imprisonment his "hired house" was a sanctuary toward

which sin-sick individuals and groups hungering for the bread of life turned for help and found healing and food for their souls; and from it in the form of his Epistles went streams of life-giving truth that have through the centuries been for the healing of the nations.

3. There is a sense of disappointment in the abrupt ending of Luke's account of this closing period of the apostle's life, but its abruptness is suggestive of what actually occurred. Had he won his case at the court of the Emperor, we may believe that Luke would have eagerly recorded it, since throughout his narrative there is an evident desire to keep prominent the fair and friendly attitude of Rome toward the apostle. There are Bible scholars who insist that Paul was at this time released and for quite a while afterward carried on extensive missionary work, planting the gospel in Spain and possibly in other sections of Europe. There is a tradition to this effect, but that tradition did not arise till near the end of the second century and is altogether without corroboration. There may be some historic facts difficult for us to explain from either the one or the other of these standpoints, but the weight of the evidence seems to point to his death in Rome in 57 or 58 A.D. in the early part of the reign of Nero.

From the beginning of Paul's work as the apostle

to the Gentiles to the close of his eventful life he was the outstanding promoter of the integrity and growth of the Christian Church. He outlined its great doctrines, he made explicit its great ethical standards, he awakened in it a sense of its responsibility as an organization, he illustrated to it in his own life of sacrificial service the significance of the Great Commission and he pleaded with the passion of one of the old prophets for the unity of the Church on the one basis of faith in the historic Jesus as the Saviour of the world. He elevated the Church above all Levitical ceremonial and freed it from all priestly assumptions and usurpations. He emphasized its democratic spirit and magnified the easy way of approach it opens to God through Christ for the humblest and most unworthy soul. He made luminous the idea that this Church is the body of Christ, an organism that receives its life directly from contact with him, and that in turn becomes the means through which he manifests himself to the world. Indeed so vital was Paul's relation to the Church that its history, up to the time of his death, is in a peculiar sense the history of his life and leadership.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the difference of view concerning the meaning of Christianity between Paul and the first disciples?

2. Was this difference fundamental in the interpretation of Christianity?

3. What would have been the result to Christianity if the Judaizers had won in the council at Jerusalem, and in the later controversy between Paul and Peter?

4. Was the decision of the council at Jerusalem a compromise, or are we to understand from Paul's account of it that his interpretation was absolutely accepted?

5. In what respects was Paul peculiarly suited to lead in giving the gospel to the Gentile world?

6. Why did Paul put himself to so much trouble in trying to keep up friendly relations with the mother Church at Jerusalem?

7. Did he emphasize a particular system of doctrine, or a special form of ecclesiasticism as necessary to the unity of the Church?

8. Upon what single relationship did he base the unity of Christ's followers?

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CHAPTER X

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS AN ORGANIZATION

CARLYLE asked, "How did Christianity rise and spread among men? Was it by institutions, and establishments, and well-arranged systems of mechanism? No! . . . It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul: and was spread by 'the preaching of the word, by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew like hallowed fire from heart to heart, till all were purified and illumined by it. Here was no mechanism; man's highest attainment was accomplished dynamically, not mechanically."

It has already been shown that Jesus made no attempt toward effecting an ecclesiastical organization. He selected a group of disciples "that they might be with him" in the easy and unconventional intercourse of brotherly fellowship prompted by the one desire of learning from him the truths and the spirits of his religion. Binding men to him in this intimate and easy fellowship was the immediate objective in Jesus's ministry. His claim to their loyalty was based on the unique winsomeness and commanding power of his per-

sonality, and it is evident that he would have been disappointed at the first appearance of a cold, formal organic life in this group of intimate friends. He was profoundly interested in the individual who was earnestly seeking the light of life and he wanted, therefore, to live the most unrestrained and natural life in communion and fellowship with those who had left their all to follow him. "One loving spirit sets another on fire." Jesus saw this and he longed for the privilege of setting each one of this group on fire through this personal contact, and in turn of seeing each of them exert a like influence on other needy souls. Hence his work began and continued through his ministry altogether without social or ecclesiastical machinery. He instituted baptism and the eucharistic feast and commanded that they should be perpetual ordinances with his followers, but their administration was no more a restricted official privilege than was teaching or leading in prayer. This is a feature in the ministry of Jesus that is often overlooked in an age in which men magnify mere machinery and look to it mainly for results in their effort to save the world.

The men who had been associated with Jesus as his apostles did not regard themselves, after Jesus left them, as clothed with any sort of official authority over their brethren, or indeed as having been invested with

official functions. It seems quite clear from the record that they held no official position in the Jerusalem church and were not considered as in any degree responsible for its government, or as clothed with any sort of authority over its movements. When Matthias was added to the eleven apostles, it was not as an office-bearer, but as a witness to the life of Jesus and especially to his resurrection, and likely this was the main significance of the apostolate at this early period. At any rate, these twelve men exercised no official control over the Church at Jerusalem.

Evidently Jesus foresaw that the Christian movement would necessarily develop into an organization. Large bodies of men cannot work together harmoniously or effectively without an organization. Specific duties with their responsibilities must be defined and the common mind must be expressed in definite rules of action. It must therefore have been clear to the mind of Jesus that the growth of Christianity would inevitably result in a compactly organized body of disciples. But the thing of historic value to us in this study is that Jesus did not regard any special type of organization as fundamental in his movement. The individual with a teachable mind, with a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and with a passion for humanity, was the unit with Jesus, and on such

rested his hope for a Christianized world. The implications of this have far-reaching significance; and if they had been even partially comprehended by those who through the centuries have determined the Church's organic form, it would have saved Christianity from much of the bigotry and superstition that at times have marred it, and from the petty and hurtful divisions that have destroyed the unity of spirit that characterized the Church of the apostolic period. The immediate result of the misinterpretation of the mind of Jesus in this matter was that near the end of the first century the erroneous idea was asserting itself that he had ordained a certain type of church organization and had committed its control to a definite body of officials.

PETER AS LEADER IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

That Peter occupied in the Church at Jerusalem a position of leadership from the very beginning is quite evident from the record. But this seems due to these two considerations: (1) His peculiar natural endowment with the elements of forceful leadership. This strong and aggressive personality asserted itself again and again during the years of his discipleship with Jesus, so that the body of disciples came to look to him as their spokesman and their natural leader. (2) It is

suggested by Paul that the first appearance of Jesus after his resurrection was to Peter, and that it was, first of all, Peter's sturdy and emphatic declaration of faith that dispersed the gloom of the disciples and fixed the truth in their minds that Jesus was still alive. His testimony and enthusiasm at once placed him in the lead of this little band and he brought them into the upper room to await further divine manifestation. Peter was therefore naturally and not officially the leader among the Jerusalem Christians in the earliest stage of the Church development.

JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER

At a comparatively early date we find that James, the Lord's brother, who did not belong to the apostolic group, and indeed did not become a disciple until after the resurrection of Jesus, was the man of chief influence in the Jerusalem Church. Tradition, running back to the latter part of the second century, makes him the first bishop of the mother Church, appointed to this position by the apostles themselves. Very little weight, however, is to be attached to any of these early traditions; and, as there is serious doubt whether the term bishop was at all used among the Jewish Christians, it seems altogether unhistorical to use the term in connection with James's work in the early Church. We

may go further and assert that there is no trustworthy evidence that James ever held an official position in the Church at Jerusalem. Because of his genuine piety, his forceful personality, his superior judgment, and his peculiar relation to Jesus, he exerted a controlling influence in the councils of that Church, and not because of official position and authority.

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THE JEWISH CHURCH

1. In the early years of the Church these Jewish Christians lived in a manner very similar to the easy, spontaneous way of life of the days of Jesus's ministry. As has already been shown, there was only a dim line drawn between them and their Jewish neighbors. They still worshiped in the temple and in the synagogues, and there is no evidence of any thought of a separation between them and the Jewish Church. Indeed, it seems to have been the confident hope of these Jewish Christians that their entire nation would quickly recognize Jesus as the Messiah and that its whole organized life—priesthood, sanhedrin, synagogues—would come under his direction and control. Not therefore until after the Jewish war with Rome, which forced the Christians permanently out of Jerusalem and into the midst of Gentile peoples, did they realize that Christianity was radically different in spirit and teaching

from Judaism and the need of a separate organic life. When the Jews rebelled against Rome, it is thought to have been done against the advice and earnest entreaty of their Christian brethren, who hoped for peace in their beloved city under Roman rule. They therefore clung to Jerusalem until the last ray of hope for their doomed city faded and then fled for their lives. As a place of safety for their future residence they chose Pella, a little city in Perea that lay entirely outside of the war area and was largely inhabited by Gentiles.

This radical change of surroundings upon the part of these Jewish Christians no doubt created an epoch in the life of Jewish Christianity. Now that the Jewish state was hopelessly destroyed, the Christians became the object of the bitterest hatred from their fellow countrymen because they opposed their open rebellion and did not come to their assistance in the hour of their great conflict. Henceforth they were looked upon as apostates. Thus all hope of bringing the Jewish Church into the Christian way of life was completely destroyed, and there was created a state of mind that made possible a distinctive Christian organization.

THE NEW ORGANIZATION

1. In the creation of a new organization their first step was the election of a man named Symeon as their

leader. As he was a cousin of Jesus, that relationship possibly was the determining consideration in placing him at the head of their Church. Although he is referred to by some later writers as bishop, it is altogether unlikely that he was so called, since these Jewish Christians would naturally be disposed to attach the titles of their former beloved Church to their new officers. Their entire organization must have been very simple and unpretentious, inasmuch as their emphasis was not on organization, but rather on the new life of brotherhood and mutual service.

2. This complete break with Judaism upon the part of this company of Jewish Christians must have had quite a revolutionary effect upon their whole religious outlook. While Paul's broader interpretations of Christianity had been quietly working in their minds and gradually expanding their views, still this final and sudden severance from the Church of their fathers disrupted such a fundamental relation in their lives that they must have experienced a special quickening of thought and expansion of mind. They now began to realize that the old Jewish system was narrow, petty, and altogether inadequate as an expression of the life of the spirit; and that it was now completely superseded by that perfect revelation of grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.

THE GROUP THAT HELD ON TO JUDAISM

There was a small company of these Jewish Christians who remained unshaken in their Jewish attachments and regarded themselves the elect remnant of God's ancient people; and, keeping themselves strictly apart from fellowship with Gentile Christians, they held rigidly to the old Jewish law and the customs of their fathers. Finally divorcing themselves from their Christian brethren and by their fanatical claims exciting the hatred of the Jews, their condition became most pathetic as they grew narrower in view and harder in spirit. They were fiercely hostile toward Paul and rejected all of his Epistles and finally almost the entire New Testament canon. Thus refusing to take in the larger significance of Christianity, this group of Jewish Christians gradually deteriorated into the Ebionism of the second century, and finally disappeared as a religious body. Resisting the great current of Christian development, their speedy decay was inevitable.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

1. After the council at Jerusalem concerning the liberty of Gentile Christians, it was mutually agreed that Paul and Barnabas would devote themselves to work among the Gentiles while the original apostles

and their coworkers would give themselves to evangelistic efforts among the Jews. This agreement was made in the interest of both the effectiveness of their work and of the unity of the Christian body. Throughout Paul's entire ministry the question of the unity of Christ's followers was a matter of the profoundest concern to him. From the very beginning of the Christian movement the disciples had a keen sense of their oneness in Christ, as Jesus had himself emphasized it. The first disciples thought of themselves, after Jesus's departure, as a family and lived together in a sort of family relationship. To foster this idea and cultivate the spirit of brotherhood that was necessary to this unity was one of Paul's ruling purposes.

As Paul conceived Christianity to be essentially a world religion, which must press its way to all the peoples of the earth, the value of a body cordially and indissolubly united at once became apparent to this great leader. He was therefore not content simply with gathering in individual converts, but was equally concerned with the development and the vitality of "the body of Christ." Hence his untiring effort to maintain cordial relations with the Church at Jerusalem and to keep alive a hearty sympathy between this Church and his mission Churches among the Gentiles. It was because this question of unity was so vitally involved

that he was anxiously concerned about the outcome of the Jerusalem Council; and it no doubt had much to do with his zeal in making his large collections for the poor of the mother Church. Hence, notwithstanding the occasional difference of opinion on certain questions between the Jerusalem Church and the growing Gentile Churches, the great principle of unity for which Paul contended lived on and really determined the course of Church history in the centuries that followed.

The term "church" was employed to designate both the local organization and the universal brotherhood. The Church in a given community, or in a private home, was simply a manifestation at this particular place of the great body of Christ, and the fact that its members were widely scattered over the world and made up of people of different nationalities and races in no sense interfered with their unity—their oneness as a brotherhood. In the mind of Paul this unity of the universal Church was a matter of spirit rather than of organization. He organized his local congregations as he traveled over his wide mission field, but there was no effort upon his part to bring these various local bodies into a general organization controlled by common officials.

2. Paul's local organizations were altogether elementary and democratic. He had no fixed form of

organic life and claimed no divine authority for any particular features that he adopted. His organization developed as the needs of the situation demanded, and it was all practical, fluid in form, and altogether human in conception.

3. During the apostolic period, and for quite a time afterward, the unity of the Church was a spiritual bond rather than a matter either of organization or of creed. All Christians were taught that they were members of the body of Christ. There was no thought of a central government and no law that compelled one group to submit to the will of another. It was solely a matter of the spirit. They were all under obligation to try to know and to do the will of Christ, but every group, and in fact every individual, was entirely free to interpret that will.

4. With the Church covering so large a part of the Roman world, we may wonder that this purely spiritual bond kept alive such a keen sense of unity throughout this widely scattered membership. Perhaps the chief explanation is found in the fact that constant intercourse was kept up among these widely separated Christian communities. In the constant streams of travel along the great Roman highways were to be found multitudes of Christians going to and fro into all the provinces and cities of the Empire. As they had

a very intimate sense of brotherhood under the inspiration of this new religion, they would inevitably be led in the various places through which they would pass to seek out their fellow Christians and rest and worship with them. We get from Paul's Epistles a very graphic view of this intercommunication. The hospitality manifested and the real brotherly interest shown would naturally be reported back in the Churches from which the pilgrims came, and thus the feeling of oneness would be intensified and brotherly love promoted.

5. Furthermore, unity and a degree of uniformity were cultivated by the many itinerant preachers and teachers who traveled throughout the early Church. We get glimpses in the Acts of the Apostles of evangelists and missionaries busily making their way from place to place, and their influence in determining views and methods of church activity must have been very great. These wandering prophets and teachers looked to no ecclesiastical body for their authority to teach and had no claim on any organization for their support. Many of them, no doubt, maintained themselves, as did Paul at times, by the labor of their own hands, but it seems to have been generally understood that entertainment and a measure of support would be furnished by those among whom they labored.

6. A third means of promoting unity was through

the sending of letters. It became a custom to send these missives from one Church to another, so that a number of Churches, in addition to the one to which a given letter might be sent, would get its inspiration and instruction. This seems to have been the course taken by many of our New Testament Epistles.

7. Along with these influences, the persecution of the early disciples had much to do in drawing them into a closer brotherhood. Throughout the early period of Christianity the forces hostile to her teaching and life hung about the Church like a menacing pestilence and awakened within its membership such a sense of their immediate danger that it drew them into a growing intimacy and an ever-deepening sense of their essential oneness. While their preaching was at this time limited in both its theological and ethical content, it is evident that their minds were gradually glimpsing the infinite implications of Jesus's doctrine of God as Father and the correlative truth, the essential brotherhood of his followers. If they were to overcome the ugly hostility of their enemies and make the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God effective, they saw that they must be one in purpose and in heart.

Thus the Church maintained her oneness and cordial fellowship until near the close of the first century, when a tendency developed to standardize certain views con-

cerning doctrine and ritual and to exclude from the brotherhood those who did not accept these standards. This tendency appears only in its incipient stage in the century with which we are dealing, but there is discoverable the beginning of a movement that grew in its scope and in the rigor of its demands. This unfortunate attitude led to a narrowing of the circle of the Christian brotherhood. Instead of the simple union determined solely by loyalty to Jesus and the spirit of brotherly love, uniformity of view and ecclesiastical technique came to be enjoined with growing emphasis, while narrowness and the spirit of intolerance began to disturb the peace of the Church and gradually to destroy its all-embracing unity. Instead of the World-Church that Jesus and Paul had in mind, this ugly attitude began to produce an exclusive institution, and to usher in the age of Roman Catholicism, which means the age of sectarianism. The beauty of an all-inclusive brotherhood, based solely on loyalty to Jesus was abandoned for the sake of a deadening uniformity in creed and ceremonial.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand the Christian Church to be?
2. When did the organized Church appear, and what were its essential features as an organization?
3. When did the original disciples begin to regard the

Christian movement as something different altogether from Judaism?

4. Were the original disciples an organized body, or simply a family group bound together by love and by a common loyalty to Jesus?

5. What was Peter's relation to this early brotherhood?

6. What was Paul's method of work in establishing the Christian Church throughout the Gentile world?

7. Did Paul's idea of the unity of the Church center in a fixed form of organization?

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CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

“WHATEVER we make of it, the Christian Church stands out as one of the most significant factors in human society for nineteen centuries. It has seen civilization overwhelmed and has seen it rise again, and has itself been the center about which it rose. Every phase of life is touched by some relation with the Church. We cannot get away from it, however much we may renounce it. We realize that it means more than we grasp—all that it means is hard to understand.” The beginnings and early growth of an institution that has weathered the storms of the centuries and so powerfully influenced human thought and action challenges the student of history.

THE APOSTLES

While the life and teachings of Jesus gave birth to Christianity, its rapid spread in the first century and its organic life were due mainly to the work and influence of a small group of men known as apostles, and to those

who came directly under their influence. The brave testimony of the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit were the foundation upon which was built that religious superstructure that we call the Christian Church. They were the leaders, the teachers, the men with first-hand information concerning the life and gracious words of Jesus, the human agents that made it possible for Christianity to win its way among peoples not at first in sympathy with its spirit and teachings. In the high respect felt for them and the moral authority of their teachings and judgments the apostles held a unique place in the Church down to the close of their lives. In this company were numbered not only the men known as the Twelve Apostles, but other men of apostolic spirit, such as James the brother of our Lord, and Paul. But only men with a divine call to leadership in the Church, evidenced by special endowments of the Holy Spirit, were numbered in the ranks of apostles. A man's apostleship was providential in origin; his credentials came from God. When missionaries were ordained and sent out by Churches, as Paul and Barnabas from Antioch, it was not this ordination that made them apostles; this was simply a formal recognition by the Church of the evidence in the lives of the men that God had called them to such work. Whatever

authority a man's apostleship carried was due solely to his character and zeal and ability. Apostles did not consider themselves officers in a particular congregation, or of the Church at large. They were simply men chosen by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the risen Christ. Of course the Churches founded by them would have great respect for their advice and counsels.

The four outstanding apostles in the New Testament story are Peter, Paul, James, and John. Two of these belonged to the original Twelve. James, the brother of our Lord, was converted to Christ after the Resurrection and became prominent in the Church at Jerusalem. The story of Paul's conversion and work has a large place in the New Testament.

Paul's great adventure in carrying the gospel to the Gentile world is historically so important, and holds such a large place in the New Testament, that we are left with limited information about other missionaries, who in their own way and in various fields wrought with a spirit not less heroic than that of the great apostle to the Gentiles. But the work of Paul was so strategic as to account for the whole historic development of the Church after the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70); hence it is easy to see the reason why it has so large a place in the New Testament story. The exact date of Paul's conversion cannot be fixed, but it was

not long after the beginnings of the Christian Church. He appears for the first time as a great leader near the year A.D. 50, or about twenty years after the resurrection of Jesus, and from that time on he was by pre-eminence the "wise master builder," under whose leadership in less than twenty years a series of strong Churches could be found reaching all the way from Syrian Antioch to Rome.

Next to Paul in order of importance in the developing apostolic Church comes John, one of the Twelve. There is sound historic evidence that John lived in Ephesus during the closing years of his life. Of his work as an evangelist, subsequent to the founding of the Church in Samaria, we have no record. Paul mentions John and Peter and James as "pillars" in the Church at Jerusalem, although there is no evidence that John took part in the debate at the great Jerusalem Council. The most reasonable conclusion from the available evidence is that John, like Peter, gave his life mainly to the task of evangelizing his own people, the Jews. It is evident from John's Gospel that he finally freed himself entirely from Jewish narrowness and accepted the broader conception of Christianity so ably championed by the Apostle Paul. It is also a just inference from some of Paul's epistles that John was not in Ephesus during the period of Paul's active ministry,

and that he did not arrive in that city until later than Paul's martyrdom. The most plausible theory is that after the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, when there was no longer work that he could do in Palestine, John moved to Ephesus, where many Jews had settled. Tradition says that he lived to a ripe old age, and for a number of years John must have been a man of outstanding influence in that group of Churches mentioned in Revelation, with Ephesus as the center of activity. That John could succeed Paul as the guiding spirit in that group of strong Churches must have been most fortunate for the Christian cause. The false doctrines and immoral lives of some within the Church, and the subtle influence of both pagan and Jewish teachings and habits of life, demanded the presence of a Christian leader who had thought deeply and soundly on the doctrines of Christ, and who had verified truth in his own experience.

In planting the Church, Peter seems to have given his entire time, with one notable exception, to mission work among people of his own race. As early as the time of the Jerusalem Council, Peter was recognized as "the apostle of the circumcision." Later Paul mentions him as leading about a wife as he travels from place to place in his evangelistic work. There were many Jews throughout Palestine and

Syria, and it is probable that Peter selected this as his first field of missionary activity, and that he was working that field while Paul was planting Christianity in Europe. A man of his energy, courage, and devotion to Christ must have been "in labors abundant" as long as he enjoyed life and freedom. There is a very early and well-established tradition that before the end of his life Peter went to Rome and did evangelistic work there among his fellow countrymen. Some of the Christian fathers, writing before the close of the first century, leave little doubt on this point. But his going to Rome must have been after the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul, and probably after the destruction of Jerusalem; or at least after the disorder in Palestine due to the Roman invasion in A.D. 68. Since Peter was the apostle who had opened the gospel dispensation to Gentiles in the household of Cornelius, and had taken a firm stand with Paul for Christian liberty in the Council of Jerusalem, he would seem to have been the providential man for holding together as Paul's successor the diverse elements of the Church in cosmopolitan Rome. However, the vague tradition that Peter had an apostolate of twenty-five years in that city has no historic foundation and is intrinsically improbable. But that he suffered martyrdom in Rome, probably near

the end of the persecution of Nero, admits of little doubt.

Little is known of James, the brother of our Lord, beyond the fact that he became the most influential man in the Jerusalem Church, where at critical moments he turned the tide in favor of Paul's view of Christianity as a religion of the spirit. Neither are there historic records of the other apostles of our Lord after the Day of Pentecost; but we may be certain that the rapid spread of Christianity in all directions from Jerusalem was due to the influence of the plain men who in preaching the gosepl could say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

EVANGELISTS

In the apostolic Churches were other preachers and leaders known as evangelists. Perhaps none of these had "seen the Lord Jesus Christ" in the flesh, and so they could not be numbered with apostles; but they were men under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and in some cases they seem to have been quicker than the apostles to free themselves from Jewish exclusiveness and recognize Christianity as a universal religion of the spirit. Stephen, first Christian martyr, belonged to this class.

PROPHETS

Another class of leaders that we see in the early Church was known as prophets. The Old Testament prophets were men who saw God in all the great movements of human society and interpreted history in terms of divine providence. The predictive element in prophecy is seen in the Apocalypse, but this was not a chief characteristic of the prophets in the apostolic Churches. "They were not an order, like apostles, bishops or presbyters, and deacons, but they were men or women who had the prophetic gift vouchsafed to them." They were the interpreters of the inexorable workings of the law of God. There was a sense in which the gift of prophecy was common to all Christians, but the persons especially recognized as prophets were those who had obtained this *charism* in an eminent degree, and because of their unusual endowment were held in honor, and the Church waited for their guidance. Prophecy was "a spiritual gift that enabled men to understand and teach the truths of Christianity, especially as veiled in the Old Testament, and to exhort and warn with authority and effect greater than human." Their services must have been highly valuable among masses of believers who were without access to the Old Testament, and who were

incapable of thinking profoundly on the problems of life and the nature of the Christian revelation, and of thus experiencing the inner compulsion of high moral and spiritual demands. But the prophets, like the apostles, made no sort of claim to official authority in the Church.

TEACHERS

The early Church developed still another class of leaders known as teachers. They seem to have formed a very numerous and important group, and they shared honors with apostles and prophets. The function of the teachers was similar to that of the prophets, the main difference being that they dealt mainly with the historic facts of Christianity, the prophets with the interpretation of those facts. The teachers must first be students, the prophets seem to have spoken largely through direct or intuitive revelation.

The four classes of leaders we have just named did not limit their activities to particular congregations, but some of them had the Church at large for their field. Their unusual gifts were generally recognized, and they were free to exercise them in any congregation they might visit. The high esteem in which such persons were held naturally gave them a commanding influence wherever they went. Usually when one or more of them were present at a religious service they

were expected to direct the service, and its meaning and value would be determined by the message delivered. They were especially looked to for guidance where error or fanaticism was rampant and sanity and truth were to be promoted.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

In the whole matter of church government and discipline, the classes just mentioned seem to have exercised a controlling influence. Their instruction related to conduct as directly as to belief. The people looked to these leaders to show them the mind of Christ for their daily lives, and of course they would be expected to reprove any who were walking disorderly, and in the case of scandalous conduct to lead in the exclusion of the offender from the Church.

BISHOPS

The giving of alms was an important feature of Christian worship and their impartial distribution came to be a delicate and a heavy responsibility in the early Church. The real condition of all the dependents in the community would have to be known and then a fair distribution of the alms collected would have to be regularly made. The first apostles, busy as they were with the work of evangelizing and teaching, soon felt

that the regular distribution of the alms was distracting and burdensome, and as a means of relief seven suitable men were chosen to whom such work could be committed, and they were solemnly set apart for this special task. This arrangement at Jerusalem was likely repeated later in other communities of Christian disciples. It is thought that this evident need of financial oversight, rather than any other consideration, led to the appointment of the earliest bishops. Paul's note of thanks to the Philippian Church for gifts sent to him affords us the first reference to bishops in the literature of the New Testament, and this association of them with the sending of the offering suggests their leading function. While this special financial work made the occasion for the creation of bishops, it is evident that this was not their only function. The orderly and intelligent conduct of religious worship, especially of the eucharist to which so much importance was attached, must have early impressed the Church with the necessity of having a chosen group of men who would make this part of the work their peculiar care, and this responsibility was added to the work of the bishops. We can see at once that such an arrangement would naturally lead to a more formal service than had existed up to that time. The original freedom in the early Church, which gave full liberty to every man to speak

or prophesy as he might feel himself moved, would be restricted by this method and finally suppressed; and the result was that the closing years of the first century witnessed the beginning of the stereotyped form of church service.

Ecclesiastical discipline was also made to function through the bishops. As has already been stated, this duty at the outset devolved upon the apostles, prophets, and teachers; but in the course of time these specially inspired men became relatively less numerous and there developed a need for capable men to administer the discipline of each Church. The bishops were the logical men, and the Churches began to look to them for all matters pertaining to church government. As this work heretofore had been in the hands of their most highly inspired men, in selecting those to whom it was now to be committed they naturally turned to the most mature and experienced men to be found, and that led to the selection of the oldest, at least in point of service. Thus the "elders" came to be regarded as a distinct class in New Testament times. This distinction, however, was quite different from that which existed between bishops and presbyters in the second century, for at this earlier date the elders were not officers, but simply the more mature class in Christian service from which the bishops were chosen.

From the very first, bishops were regarded as teachers as well as administrators of charities and supervisors of the services. In the absence of apostles, prophets, and teachers all of the high duties that devolved upon them fell to the bishops. These officials were not supposed to have the high inspiration of the apostles and prophets, and with the passing of the years and the development of set forms of doctrine and worship their teaching came to deal more and more with matters of organization rather than with the mind of the Spirit as expressed directly through the teacher. Up to the end of the first century the authority of the bishops was very limited. The ability to rule in the Church was regarded as a special gift of the Spirit, and a man was chosen for such a task because the Church believed he was ordained of God for the place. If therefore a Church found itself in doubt as to a man's call or fitness for the position, it could set aside a bishop and repudiate him as a leader. At that early stage of church development leadership did not take on a rigidly official character, but was determined solely by spiritual and mental fitness for high religious service.

In the course of time particular congregations began to feel that the direction of their affairs should be entirely in the hands of their own bishops, or overseers, rather than left to the judgment of itinerant prophets

or missionaries. This led to the claim of the exclusive right on the part of bishops to govern their own Churches, or dioceses—rights of which no authority could deprive them. With a growing emphasis on the unity of the Church, the congregation came to be considered as but a local manifestation of the universal Church, and we can easily see how this idea of the inalienable right of a bishop in his own diocese led toward the conception of the universal episcopate, with authority extending over the universal Church.

THE BROTHERHOOD

Thus the Church as shaped during the apostolic period was a world-wide fraternity of people, young and old, gathered from all races and conditions of life and held together simply by their loyalty to Jesus and their desire to promote his kingdom by sacrificial service. It was not a great piece of ecclesiastical machinery that was holding men fast in its mighty grip and forcing its way to influence and power; nor was it a system of carefully worded dogmas to which men's minds and consciences must be made to submit. Rather it was a living historic movement whose origin and continued source of life and power were found in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. Through him had come to them such a consciousness of the fatherhood of God and such

a unique sense of the brotherhood of man that they thought of Christianity simply as a new way of life. It was therefore "a movement which, during the first century, spread throughout the world unfettered by creeds or rules or complex organization and, therefore, free to adapt itself to the varied needs of humanity. The bonds of union in this brotherhood were from within, growing out of a great common purpose and of a mutual love. Their tireless efforts, therefore, were prompted by fraternal coöperation rather than the driving power of an organization or unbrotherly competition. Their great objective reached far beyond all that is implied in man-made ecclesiasticisms and was found in the ideal of perfect realization of the will of God as that will is revealed through Jesus Christ. In the life of the disciples of the first Christian century therefore we see the great social and spiritual ideal which Jesus called the kingdom of God so illustrated that it served as an inspiring prophecy of its future complete realization in the life of the race.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the functions and qualifications of apostles in the early Church?
2. Who were the prophets in the early Christian Church, and what were their duties?
3. What was the difference between teacher and prophet?

4. When did bishops appear in the Church, and what were their special duties?

5. Were these various classes office-bearers, or rather men with special gifts for high spiritual service?

6. At the close of our first century had the Christian Church taken on a general organic form, or was each local group entirely independent?

7. According to our New Testament sources is the Church a special type of organization divinely ordained, or is its organic form solely a matter of expediency and efficiency?

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(See list for Chapter X.)

CHAPTER XII

DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

THE New Testament period was characterized by great literary activity throughout the Roman world. Writers of various nationalities sent out a stream of literature in all the varied forms through which man had learned to express himself. We are not, therefore, surprised that a life like that of Jesus and a vigorous movement like Christianity would incite many to take it "in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things that were most surely believed among" the early disciples.

There were two types of literature much in vogue at this period, the letter and the epistle. The letter was an easy and familiar document written to a particular individual, while the epistle was intended for a group or a number of groups and was therefore more formal and elaborate. Late excavations have brought to light many examples of both of these types of literature and have thus thrown much light on our New Testament writings. Paul made use of both these types in writing to his coworkers and followers and must have exer-

cised a very wide and effective influence by this means over the early Christian Church; and as these productions of Paul's busy life constitute the larger part of our New Testament they have mightily influenced thought and conduct through all the Christian centuries. Paul not only has the distinction of being the most voluminous New Testament writer, but also of being the author of the earliest Christian literature preserved to us, as the first Thessalonian Epistle is generally regarded as the earliest extant piece of Christian writing.

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

Under persecution Paul had hurried away from Thessalonica, after having spent some time in that city preaching and teaching the new way of life. His concern for the members of that Church in the midst of their enemies was so keen that from Athens he sent Timothy back to encourage and strengthen them and then to bring him word as to their condition. While Timothy, upon his return, had many cheering things to relate in regard to their faithfulness and their devotion to Paul, he also reported that there were many evils in the Church, many outcroppings of their old heathen vices—impurity, lust, wrangling, and especially a tendency to neglect the ordinary duties of life under the

influence of their expectancy of the speedy return of Jesus. There were also some accusations among them against Paul himself. This report from Timothy led him to write this first epistle, and determined its contents.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

As this first epistle failed fully to accomplish its purpose in correcting the growing tendency to neglect their ordinary avocations through their expectations of the sudden return of the Lord, Paul wrote his second brief epistle, in which he devoted his attention almost wholly to the suppression of this hurtful fanaticism.

THE CORINTHIAN EPISTLES

It seems likely that two years passed after Paul's successful work at Corinth before he wrote his first epistle to that Church. His work there had been remarkably successful, and he doubtless left them with the feeling that they were so well indoctrinated and trained in Christian living that their spiritual growth and sound development were assured. But while he was in Ephesus, members from the household of Chloe came from Corinth and brought him very disturbing news of conditions in the Corinthian Church. The party spirit so characteristic of the Greeks had asserted

itself in the Church to such an extent that it was divided into hostile factions. The Church was also tainted with the social immorality so prevalent in that great commercial center and their Greek minds were finding difficulty in accepting Paul's view of the resurrection. These and minor questions started a voluminous correspondence between Paul and the Corinthian Church. It seems that he received two letters from the Church, making direct inquiry about certain matters of belief and conduct, and later some representatives from the Church visited him to lay before him in detail the whole situation. It is evident from a direct reference in our first Epistle to a former "letter" that this was not the first document Paul sent this Church.

This first Corinthian Epistle as it appears in the New Testament is the longest and one of the most charming of all those intimate messages that Paul sent out to his Churches. He takes up the various questions that had come to him and the ugly reports of their immoral tendencies and with great courage and beautiful tenderness urges on them the high ethical standards of Christianity which grow directly out of individual experience.

It seems likely that our 2 Corinthians contains fragments of two other epistles written by Paul to this Church during this period of anxiety. Having received word that his former letter greatly disturbed them by

awakening their consciences, he now hastens to make some personal explanations and then to express his love for them and his deep joy at the evidence of their repentance and spiritual quickening. The epistle throbs with the deepest emotion and is charged with inspiration.

In the Corinthian Epistles Paul discusses questions growing out of economic conditions, the sex problem in its varied aspects, the marriage relation, and the general application of the law of love to all social relationships. These views of Paul, so nobly expressed on these vital questions, not only quickened and enlightened the Corinthian Church, but have also been most powerful in creating the standards of our present Christian civilization.

GALATIAN EPISTLE

The Epistle to the Galatians seems to have been written to a group of Churches established and cultivated by Paul in Galatia. After he had established these Churches and had gone into other regions, certain Judaizing teachers came among these Christians insisting that unless they were circumcised and carefully observed the Jewish law, Christ would profit them nothing. They then attacked Paul's authority, insisting that he had never seen Christ and had no commission from him as had the Twelve. He was therefore, they

insisted, teaching a false gospel. When news of this came to Paul and he learned that many of his converts were, through this false teaching, turning away from the grace of God, he was most profoundly stirred, and in this frame of mind wrote his impassioned letter to the Galatians. Both from the standpoint of doctrine and of the history of the apostolic period, it is one of the most important of all of his writings.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Paul's Epistle to the Romans is peculiar in that it was written to a Church with whose planting he had nothing to do—a Church in fact which he had never visited. But he had long entertained a desire to visit Rome, and it was evidently a part of his program for the future when he wrote the epistle. From the early part of his ministry he seems to have had his heart set on evangelizing the entire Roman Empire, and hence his deep desire to go to this center of the nation and preach his gospel of the more abundant life. Up to this time it had been impossible for him to carry out this desire, and he now writes to the Church at Rome to present his reasons for not having visited them up to this time, and to prepare the way for the access of his gospel to their minds. And yet with this simple purpose why this elaborate doctrinal statement? If his

promised visit was to give him the opportunity he coveted, it was important that all misunderstandings and prejudices be removed, and that they have a correct view of the nature of his gospel and a sympathetic appreciation of the general soundness of his views before he should make his appearance among them. His long and intimate association with Priscilla and Aquila, who probably began the Christian life in Rome, enabled him to become thoroughly acquainted with the difficulties in the way of the approach of his message, and in order to make sure of the removal of all misapprehensions; and to secure for himself a sympathetic hearing, this elaborate theological and ethical statement was sent them. As this epistle is the most complete exposition on record of Paul's views concerning the gospel, it is evident that the fears entertained with regard to his teaching grew out of a superficial conception of the scope and deep significance of Christianity. He therefore attempted to prepare the way for his personal ministry among them by this elaborate presentation of the fundamental principles underlying the religion of Jesus.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT

Paul's long-coveted visit to Rome was finally made as a prisoner in the hands of Roman officers. But notwithstanding the fact that he was thus imprisoned,

bound with chains and probably facing death, in addition to the arduous evangelistic work carried on within the confines of his prison, with the help of a few faithful assistants, he tirelessly gave himself to the instruction of his widely planted Gentile Churches through letters and epistles. A number of our New Testament epistles came from his hand during this trying period of imprisonment. The epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, with their persuasive call to holy living in the name of the glorified Christ; the epistle to the Philippians, with its charming revelation of the deeper experiences of the author and of the intimacy and warmth of the ties that bound him and his converts together; the letter to Philemon about the return of his converted slave, "the most charming thing of the kind ever written," manifesting the most refined tact and delicacy of feeling in the approach to the conscience and heart of his friend—all of these came from Paul's pen during his imprisonment in Rome. The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus, with their wealth of instruction for meeting their appointed tasks and throbbing with a deep fatherly interest in these sons in the gospel, cannot be definitely located as to the time and place of their composition, although there are some intimations that they were written during this imprisonment.

Paul's service to the cause of Christianity as a writer, as well as a teacher and organizer, is beyond measure. He found it enmeshed in Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness and, freeing it from these limitations, he made it luminous before the eyes of a dying world. He was the invincible leader in transplanting Christianity from the unpromising soil of Judaism into the more fertile field of the Gentile world. Both in his life and in his epistles he made the Christian life to appear as a directly personal, spiritual fellowship with God and as being essentially ethical and social in its nature. The implications that were in the teachings and ideals of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God, Paul developed in his epistles in a most masterful way. The external structure and the creeds of historic Christianity are largely the result of his building; but, as he always asserted, the foundation on which it is laid is Jesus Christ.

THE LOGIA

The first document containing the written sayings of Jesus, of which we have any definite knowledge, is what is known as the *Logia*. The author of it is not known, but it is believed that it came from one of the early disciples. The tradition that Matthew compiled it is not at all certain. Mark, Matthew, and Luke may

have had access to it in the writing of the books that bear their names.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The first of the Gospels written was that of Mark. It was evidently the author's aim to give us an explicit account of the deeds of Jesus, although we find frequent recitals of his words in making complete his picture of the worker and ceaseless Servant of man. His style is easy and colloquial; and while he gives us a bare outline of that busy life, it is unequalled in its vividness and carries all the marks of veracity. John Mark is quite generally regarded as the author of this book.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Matthew, in the composition of the Gospel that bears his name, used information found in the *Logia* and manifests acquaintance with the Gospel of Mark. But his aim in writing was different from that of Mark, his chief purpose being to set forth and emphasize the Messiahship of Jesus. He therefore quotes at length both from the public and the more private utterances of Jesus. We know nothing for certain about either the place or the time of the composition of this Gospel.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

In the writing of the third Gospel Luke, the author, tells us in his prologue that he used all available sources in securing his material. He had the real historical instinct and his whole purpose in compiling his information and writing his book was to give to those to whom he was writing an altogether accurate history of the life and work of Jesus. Hence in his careful search for the most authentic information there is no doubt that he consulted both the Logia and the Gospel of Mark. This book is supposed to have been written a decade or two before the close of the first century and there is no reasonable ground for doubting that Luke, the beloved physician and companion of Paul, was its author.

To these Gospels we are deeply indebted for our knowledge of the historic Jesus. With all of Paul's splendid service to the cause of Christianity through his voluminous writings, we derive from him scarcely any information about the life and ministry of the Man of Galilee. It is therefore from the Gospels that we get our ideas of the personality and character of our Lord. They have kept Jesus, as a real character, fresh in the mind of the Church and have been channels through which his vitalizing power has constantly been felt in

the life of his followers. Moreover, they have held the Church to the great historic facts of its faith and have thus prevented its being carried away by wild speculations. "The picture of Jesus as he was in his divine Sonship and in his human brotherhood—a picture preserved in our Gospels alone—the world could not do without."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Gospel of John was written much later than the other Gospels. The author it seems was attempting in this book to combat certain dangerous trends of thought concerning the person of Jesus. On the one hand was the view that Jesus was simply a superior prophet or teacher, and on the other was the equally dangerous doctrine that he had no real humanity. To meet these dangerous views, this Gospel declares with commanding emphasis and assurance the divinity of Jesus and so presents certain great events in his life and ministry as to make them proclaim his divine power. Then, the author is equally concerned that the human side of Jesus's life be recognized and he therefore represents him as weary, hungry, and unutterably heavy-hearted. He will not let his readers forget, as they follow him through the pages of his book, that it is the Man of Galilee, the historic Jesus, who is the Life and the Truth and the Way.

The author also felt that there was special need for emphasizing the exalted conception of love imbedded in Christianity. Hence he makes radiant Jesus's teaching concerning the love that God has for men, and the self-sacrificing love men experience when they abide in Him.

EPISTLES OF JOHN

The three epistles that bear the name of John are characterized by a persuasive tenderness and a deep mystical insight into the heart of Christ's gospel. The first of these epistles was written in answer to certain unsound teachers who were denying that Jesus was the Christ, and were also insisting that the Christian was above all law—that no sin was possible to him even should the whole moral law be ignored. The second and third of these short epistles were also designed to guard the Church against certain dangerous teachers who were circulating among the brethren.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The last of the books with the name of John as the author is the book of Revelation. Obviously this book was written when the Church was passing through a period of great persecution as its theme is the prolonged and painful struggle that Christianity was having with the heathenism and organized evil of its day,

and the joyful assurance of an ultimate and complete victory. The apocalyptic hopes, to which the Christians held as a part of their Jewish heritage, are made articulate in this book, and bold figures of speech and a highly colored symbolism are used to give expressions to these hopes and expectations. Hence the great difficulty the modern mind finds in attempting to understand its Revelation.

EPISTLES OF PETER

Our New Testament has two epistles ascribed to the apostle Peter. The first of these deals with the persecutions through which the Church was passing and exhorts those to whom it was sent to patient endurance and faithfulness in living that the Gentiles might, through "their good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The main purpose of the second epistle seems to be confirming of the Church in the faith of Jesus' second coming for the purpose of "salvation and of judgment." Both of these epistles are thoroughly practical and must have been of immense service in the daily lives of those early Christians.

EPISTLE OF JAMES

One of the most interesting and valuable of this group of letters is the Epistle of James. The aim of the epistle is clearly the correction of certain dangerous interpretations that were at that time finding their way into Christian teaching. Paul's emphasis on faith had evidently been used by false teachers as ground for insisting that intellectual belief was the only vital thing and that therefore conduct was of little importance. This epistle, in attempting to counteract that tendency, is devoted exclusively to works, or the daily conduct of the Christian in his social relationships.

THE LETTER OF JUDE

The letter of Jude was written later than the date of Paul's epistles. The Christians to whom it was addressed were in great danger of being poisoned in their minds by false brethren, against whom he warns them. These false teachers were men who were living grossly immoral lives, were ignoring divinely constituted authority, and were therefore creating schisms and seriously hurting the Church.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

A brief study of the "Epistle to the Hebrews" appropriately closes this sketch of the Christian literature

of the first century. "In its literary form and thought this epistle stands in solitary grandeur among New Testament writings." It was written near the end of the century, but nothing at all definite can be asserted with regard to its authorship. Whoever may have been the author, he must have been a finished Greek scholar, a thoroughly informed theologian, and a brilliant rhetorician. The purpose of the author was to strengthen the faith and loyalty of the Christians to whom the epistle was addressed in a time of great persecution and distress. To this end he attempts to show the supreme glory of Christ's person and work. To quicken their faith and inspire courage, he dwells at some length on the priesthood of Christ—"our great high priest," he insists. He then reminds them that sufferings properly met and borne deepen and enrich life's experiences and that there may be produced through them "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Finally he calls attention to the covenant relation that exists between the Christian and God, and the idea of the Gospel as a new covenant is elaborated and emphasized.

OTHER LITERATURE

We have thus very briefly sketched the literature of this period that has passed into our New Testament. But this is only a part of the contribution made by the

believers of that age to Christian thought and to the development of the Christian Church. It is hardly reasonable to suppose that men who were vigorous thinkers and brilliant writers, like the author of Hebrews, for instance, would stop with a single contribution to a cause for which they had such marked loyalty. But the Christians of the generations following the apostles, in selecting the literature they felt valuable for their guidance and instruction, based their decisions on the contents of the writings and then on the special claim they thought the writers might have to the inspiration of the Spirit. This naturally focused their attention on the writings of the apostles and those authors most intimately associated with them. Hence from the mass of literature that was thus produced they selected and preserved in the main only those writings that they considered apostolic, or that had grown out of intimate association with the apostles.

QUESTIONS

1. What evidence do we have that the first Christian century was a period of literary activity?
2. How did the record of Jesus' sayings and doings likely have its origin?
3. About what time in his ministry did Paul begin his literary activities?
4. What evidence have we that these epistles of Paul were

widely read during this early period and were effective in shaping the views and life of the Church of the first century?

5. What has been the special value to the Church of the Gospels, with their simple story of the life and words of Jesus?

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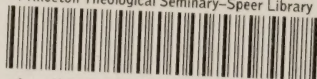
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